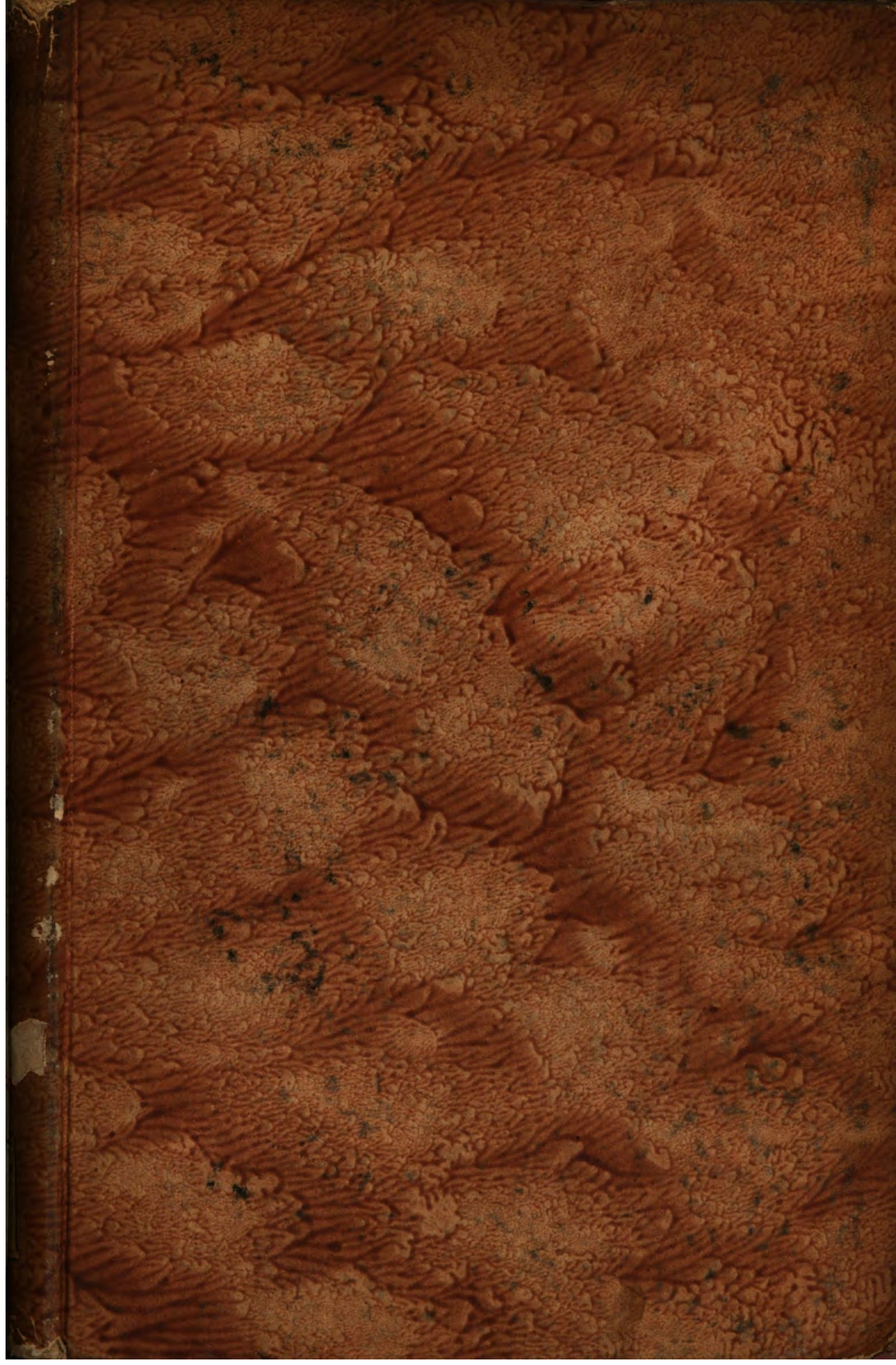




Phil. pr. 912^f

Parker

635.

Erasmus Darwin J. G. W.
1768.

Philosophical Meditations,

WITH

DIVINE INFERENCES.

CONTAINING,

- | | |
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| <p>I. THE Proof of a Necessary, Self-existent, Independent, and Eternal Being.</p> <p>II. THE Nature of Eternity and Infinite Space consider'd.</p> <p>III. THE Nature of the Punishment of the Wicked; with the Author's Opinion of the Place of Hell.</p> <p>IV. THE Nature of the Creation of our Globe the Earth, and Remarks upon the Deluge, with Divine Inferences from every Particular.</p> | <p>V. THE Ninth Chapter of St. PAUL's Epistle to the ROMANS, clear'd from the rigid and uncharitable Doctrines of absolute Election and Reprobation and the Contrary prov'd therefrom; with Remarks upon the pernicious Consequences that have attended those Doctrines, as being destructive of the Nature of Religion and Virtue.</p> <p>VI. THE Christian Oeconomy the only true one now in the World.</p> <p>VII. Religion and Virtue recommended to every ones Choice.</p> |
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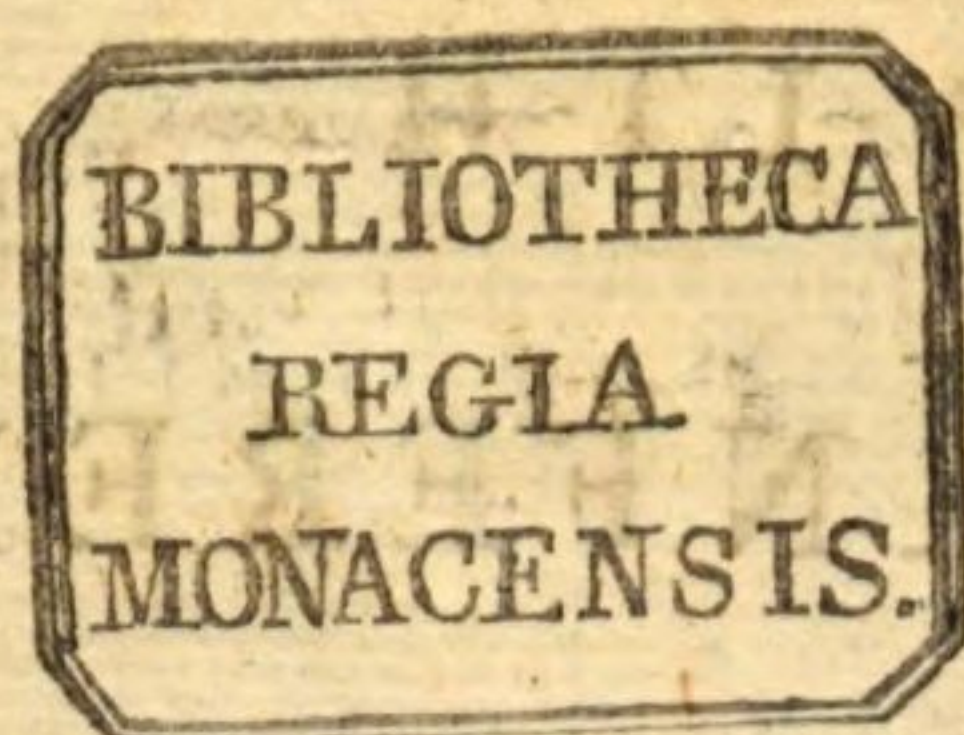
By BENJAMIN PARKER,
Author of a late Discourse on the Longitude at Sea.

THE SECOND EDITION.

BIRMINGHAM:

Printed by T. WARREN, for the AUTHOR
at *Mary-Bridge*, DERBY; and sold by the
BOOKSELLERS in *London* and the *Country*.

M,DCC,XXXVIII.



V. The Mind's Capacity of St.
Paul's Epistle to the Romans
extract from the right and un-
derstanding Doctrines of absolute
Liberty and Reason and
the contrary proof of determinism;
with Remarks upon the period-
ical Consequences that have ac-
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ligion and Virtue.
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MDCCLXXIII.

TO HIS GRACE
WILLIAM,
DUKE of Devonshire,

Marquis of *Hartington*, Earl of *Devonshire*, Baron *Cavendish* of *Hardwick*, Lord Lieutenant and *Custos Rotulorum* of the County of *Derby*, one of His Majesty's most Honourable Privy-Council, Lord High Steward of His Majesty's Household, and Knight of the most Noble Order of the Garter, &c.

May it please your GRACE,



SINCE I have had the Honour of your Grace's most liberal Subscription to my following Design, and likewise the Encouragement of your Grace's Patronage, I beg Leave to make my most grateful Acknowledgments for the same; not doubting but your Grace's great Condescension and kind Acceptance of a Performance intended for the general and spiritual Good of Mankind, in the Behalf of Religion and Virtue, will have

D E D I C A T I O N.

the greater Force and Influence upon the Minds of the Readers, and incline them to a due Attention. For as the World cannot be ignorant of those illustrious Virtues which flow from your Grace, and are derived to you from your *most renowned Ancestors*; so I cannot but persuade my self, that your Grace's Approbation of this well-meant Endeavour will render it more serviceable to the World, and make it better answer the End propos'd by,

Your GRACE'S

Most Obliged, and

Most Devoted,

Humble Servant,

Benjamin Parker.

THE PREFACE.



THE following Discourses are design'd to rectify the prevailing Errors in Faith and Practice, so visible amongst us, and so disgraceful to our Holy Religion. How far I shall succeed in this Attempt, which I am sure is well design'd, I must leave to the Grace of God acting upon the good Disposition of the Readers. If any shall charge me with erroneous Principles in any of the Hypotheses I have maintain'd, whether Divine or Philosophical, I desire they will be so just as to produce their Reasons for doing so; and I shall either submit to them, if convincing, or else produce some better Reasons, if I can, to support my own Principles, than they have done to destroy them.

I am entirely satisfied (and hope I have produced sufficient Arguments to satisfy all reasonable Men) in the Principles I have maintain'd against the Doctrine of God's determining the Happiness or Misery of his Creatures in a future

State before their Creation, without Respect to their Actions; and hope to shew that my Philosophical Notions or Probabilities are also grounded upon Reason, and no ways clashing with, but consonant to, the Holy Scriptures, and tending to discover to us the consummate Wisdom of the infinitely powerful Contriver of the Universe, and GREAT AUTHOR of Nature.

For how manifest are the Footsteps of infinite Wisdom and Foresight in fixing of Laws to all the glorious Heavenly Bodies, which they, of themselves, cannot transgress; so that their various Phænomena are accountable, and their Motions deducible to certain Calculations, and thereby the several Configurations of the Planets of our System, and the Eclipses of the Luminaries are foretold.

Which exact Order and Harmony has been observ'd by all the inanimate Bodies of the Universe; amongst which there never was any Confusion or Alteration of the Laws first assign'd them by their Creator, except when the rational Inhabitants thereof have given Cause to the Creator of them to put a Violence upon the Order of Nature. Thus upon the Disobedience of our first Parents, as Mr. Whiston supposes, the Earth receiv'd its diurnal Rotation: Thus likewise at the Deluge, (that great Violence of the Order of Nature) he again supposes the Earth, by the Attraction of the Comet that drown'd it,
was

The P R E F A C E. vii

was drawn out of a circular into an elliptical Orbit: So at our Blessed Saviour's Crucifixion, the glorious Luminaries were deprived for three Hours of their influencing this Globe with those Rays of Light for which they were created. Now these and other Instances which might be given, do really shew there is an Author of Nature; since we find that the same Author can as easily destroy or alter the first Order or Laws assign'd it, as he could at first establish it; which is never done but upon some Great Occasion relating to the rational Part of the Creation.

If we look into secondary Causes in the Order of Nature amongst us upon this Globe, we shall find things carried on in the same Order and Harmony, and in general to answer our Ends, Aims, and Expectations, (so far as they are kept within the Bounds of Reason) when they are not by some Default of our own or others alter'd. And had not Nature been thus wisely established, there could have been nothing but Discord and Confusion amongst the Works of the Creation, which now have establish'd Laws, which are not violated, as I have said, but upon some extraordinary Occasions, arising from the rational Part of the Creation: And yet we find that some Men's Minds are so strangely corrupted, as to infer from the wise Order of Nature, that all things came by Nature. Good God! How amazing this!—That the Depravity of Man should make it necessary sometimes

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for the Almighty Being to supersede the Order of that curious Nature he had at first establis'd, to establis the Belief of his own Existence, and to enforce his Precepts upon us by some extraordinary Acts to reduce us to a State of Rectitude: I say, how amazing is it, (for it will bear repeating) that notwithstanding this there should still be any that can deny the Author of Nature, and make Nature itself the Cause of all things! For it must be a self-evident Truth, that if there was not an Author of Nature, or a Being superior to it, then could there never have been perform'd any supernatural Actions: So that if the Order and Harmony of natural Causes, wisely adapted to answer their Ends, are not sufficient to convince every one of the Wisdom, Power, and Existence of the Creator of them, (that they may have no Pretence to Unbelief) the supernatural Performances that have been manifested by a Divine Power, do certainly evidence that there is a Being above Nature, who can, when he pleases, invert its Order; which, whenever that is done, is called miraculous. Thus our Blessed Saviour's Miracles when on Earth, and those of his Disciples, which they were empower'd to do in his Name, were occasion'd by the Unbelief of that present Generation, in order to establis the Belief of their Divine Mission and Doctrines both to them and all succeeding Generations. And as this most plainly discovers to us a Being supernatural, so it no less discovers that those Naturalists, who
would

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would believe no Being superior to Nature, are Fools; from whence 'tis probable the Word NATURAL, used for a Fool, might have its Original: And well would it be for these NATURALS if they were Fools in no higher a Sense, than what now the common Acceptation of the Word imports; for those who never receiv'd the distinguishing Character, REASON, can never be call'd to account for abusing it.

I have in the following Discourses endeavour'd to comprize my Subjects in as short a Manner as the Nature of them would bear, and have purposely avoided entering into a Repetition of the many contrary Notions and Absurdities that Men have fallen into; humbly conceiving, that if I establish my own Arguments, by producing sufficient Reasons to prove them Truths, than the contrary Notions must necessarily appear to be Falshoods, Falshoods so gross and palpable, that 'tis amazing to me how it ever enter'd into the Heart of Man to imagine them, much more how they could gain such an Entertainment in the World as to be espoused by so many blind Followers: That Doctrine in particular, of God's fore-ordaining of all things to come to pass, in their Sense, is most false and monstrous; for it makes him the Author of not only Good but Evil, that he may reward the one, and punish the other, merely to gratify himself, and to exercise arbitrarily his Mercy and Justice. But if this were so, then there had been no Room for the
Exercise

x The P R E F A C E.

Exercise of either; for then neither Good, so forced, could have been rewardable, nor Evil, so occasion'd, could have been punishable, without making that holy, just, and infinitely wise and merciful Being an insupportable Tyrant. What shall we say then of those Men who have not blush'd openly to affirm, that there were Infants in Hell not a Span long? A shocking Expression this! and highly reflecting upon God's infinite Mercy. Was not the Plaister in Christ as large as the Sore in Adam? And shall any, for whom Christ died, suffer for original Sin, that were never guilty of actual ones? Does not our Saviour, speaking of Children, say, Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven? And if his Merits may be convey'd to the chiefest of Sinners upon Repentance, why should we not suppose they will also extend to those Infants who never offended by any actual Transgressions? A true Notion of God's infinite Mercy will never suffer us to doubt of it: For whoever considers those Texts of Scripture which speak of God's Visitation of the Parents Sins upon the Children, may observe them to respect no more than their Sufferings in this World; for 'tis plain from Ezek. xviii. 20. that as to a future State, the Son shall not suffer for the Father's Disobedience, nor the Father for his Son's: The soul that sinneth, it shall die; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. It

It may be observ'd that I have taken the Copernican System for granted, without giving any Reasons for so doing; which being prov'd sufficiently by others, I judg'd it needless for me to repeat. If any be not satisfied herein in reconciling the Earth's Motion, and the Stability of the Sun with the Scriptures, let them read Mr. Whiston's Preface to his Theory of the Earth, and Dr. Derham's Astro-Theology, which will give Satisfaction herein to any ingenious and unprejudic'd Reader, this System being to most of the Learned, I believe, proved to a Demonstration.

And as to the Newtonick or New System, of the Fixed Stars being so many Suns, &c. though it carries in it, I think, more than a Probability of Truth, yet I fear this Persuasion has, thro' Abuse, been the Occasion of stumbling to some of our greatest Mathematicians, with respect to their Faith in the eternal Divinity of the Son of God. Influenced by the abovesaid Opinion of such Multitudes of Suns and Planets, Mr. Whiston is, I suppose, induced to believe that many of the Inhabitants of such Planets being degenerated from their original Creation, as well as we, would therefore stand in need of Redemption, and might have their particular Redemptions effected by created Beings: And if their Redemptions could be effected by the most perfect created Beings, then, as they

they would infer, why not ours? This Notion, as I apprehend, seem'd to be the Reason of Mr. Whiston's falling away from that Faith he so strenuously profess'd to believe of the Blessed Trinity in his Theory of the Earth. But that none have Reason to make this a Rock of Offence in their Belief of the fundamental Article of our holy Religion, I shall endeavour to evince to those that have fallen in with the Opinion of the aforesaid New System.

Let us then imagine never so many Suns and habitable Globes revolving about them, and that many of the rational Inhabitants of them may have fallen from their first pure Estate; and not only so, but be likewise capable of Recovery from their Fall, and that God in Mercy would take some Method to restore such of them as would be obedient to a second Covenant, as he has done with respect to us; 'tis very reasonable to believe, that no created Being could do any more than perform its own Duty to its Creator, and therefore is incapable to make Satisfaction for the Offences of any other Beings: But this being allow'd, as in Reason it ought to be, it may be ask'd, by what means then could any of the rational Inhabitants of other Globes receive Redemption? I answer, that it is very plain from the Scriptures, that our Blessed Redeemer is co-equal, co-essential, and co-eternal with the Father; and particularly in that he was the Creator of all things, and without him

him was not any thing made that was made *: *And is it not then highly reasonable to believe that he, who is infinite in Power, can infinitely display his Mercies to all the Works of his Creation, and that his perfect Obedience perform'd upon this Globe, and his suffering for Sin, that knew none himself, has made an infinite Satisfaction to Divine Justice for the Offences of all the rational, reclaimable Part of his Creations? But indeed, which way this Knowledge may be reveal'd to the Inhabitants of other Globes, we must leave to the Counsel of Divine Wisdom: 'Tis sufficient to us, that he, being supremely infinite in all Perfections, could by one Oblation of himself for all the Works of his Creation, ransom the Whole, and become the Mediator of a new Covenant to all, who were not guilty of total Apostacy.*

But here, it may be another Query will arise, That, allowing that by suffering upon one Globe he could ransom all others not irreclaimably fallen, how came it to pass that he should chuse this Globe rather than any other to make his Appearance in, and to undergo these Sufferings upon? I answer, That if the Redemption of the reclaimable Part of his fallen Creatures required such Satisfaction to be perform'd by their Creator, the Place he would make his Appearance in for the Performance of it was alone in the Counsel

* John i. 3.

of his infinite Wisdom; as was also his Descent, which was promised to the Seed of Abraham; which could be but in one Family at last, no more than his Appearance in this way could be but upon one Globe: Yet as by his Incarnation in one Family all the Families of the Earth might be blessed, so by his Appearance upon one Globe, by his perfect Obedience and infinite Satisfaction, he might become the Mediator of a New Covenant to all the fallen, rational, reclaimable Inhabitants of the whole Creation. Besides,

It may be question'd, whether any of his Creatures, upon any other Globe whatsoever, would have treated him in the Way and Manner he was treated here; and whether there could be found any created, rational Beings so hard to be convinced of the Truth of Reveal'd Religion: And when we consider the Stubbornness and Obstinacy of the Human Race, and the great Difficulty of persuading many to believe and comply with the Means of Salvation; when we consider also the Probability, that the rational, reclaimable Inhabitants upon other Globes may with less Difficulty receive reveal'd Religion, and the offer'd Mercies of a Mediator; we shall see Reason to suppose that this Part of his Creation was the most proper for this GREAT TRANSACTION. But these things being Secrets to us, and it being sufficient to our Salvation, that

that we believe what the Scriptures reveal, and live suitably to their Precepts; I should not so far have pry'd into them, but only to make the following Inference, viz. That it being possible to give a rational Account how and by what Means Christ's Merits might be convey'd to the whole universal Creation, that have not fallen into total Apostacy; so the Opinion of a Plurality of Worlds, with various Inhabitants rational and irrational, and that many of the rational Inhabitants of them may have fallen from their first pure Estate, is no just Ground for the Maintainers of it to run into Heresy, in not Acknowledging the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour, but is on the contrary a strong Confirmation of it; because 'tis thro' his Divinity only that he could make so infinite a Satisfaction, and thro' his absolute Perfection of Obedience that he became the Mediator and Saviour of all his reclaimable rational Creatures; allowing the Supposition I have gone upon, that many of the Inhabitants upon other Globes may have fallen from their first pure Estate, and be capable of Recovery from their Fall. This therefore being sufficient to our present Purpose, I shall forbear making any further Suppositions of their Uses at present, and proceed to the Work intended; in which I have endeavour'd to rectify Men's mistaken Notions in Religion, and to lead them to the Truth: And that my Endeavour so this End may have the proposed Effect upon
the

the Readers, and that a suitable Practice may be consequent thereupon, is the Desire and hearty Prayer of

Him that wisheth

Your future Happiness,

B. P.



Philo-



Philosophical Meditations,

W I T H

Divine Inferences, &c.



H E N I behold the *Glories* of the *Heavenly Bodies*, even those of our Solar System, and consider the Beauty, Order, and Harmony thereof, and observe several Bodies not visible to the naked Eye; as for Example, the *Satellites* of *Saturn* and *Jupiter*; I must hence conclude these things to be the Product of infinite Wisdom and Power, and not the Effects of Inactivity and blind Chance, (of which more hereafter) but the Works of Intelligence, Foresight, and Contrivance; and of which we have sufficient Footsteps upon our own Globe to convince any reasonable Man of, who is not bias'd by Vice. But what are these Works

of our System, in comparison of those of the whole Universe, which, as far as our Sight can reach, we find interspers'd with glorious Bodies, which in all Probability do *all* or *most* of them equal the Splendor of our Sun, and for ought we know (and as 'tis reasonable to believe) have the like Uses in being serviceable to concomitant Planets, which are revolving round them, as we, the Inhabitants upon this Globe, with our neighbouring Planets, do round our Sun, the Centre of our System? These things duly look'd into, one would think should be sufficient to silence all Atheism for ever; which indeed had never had any Entertainment in the World, had not Immorality, Vice, and Wickedness first caused Men to lose their Hopes of future Rewards; and that the Fears of future Punishments might not be an Allay to their sensual Pleasures, they would thence persuade themselves that there is no future Reckoning for them. How weak and foolish these Persuasions are, and how dismal the Consequences will be, I shall endeavour to set forth in the following Discourse; in which I shall, as agreeable to my Purpose, make use of several Topicks, and draw proper Conclusions from them.

First, I shall prove a necessary, eternal, self-existent, and independent Being, upon which depends the Order of Nature, and from whom all things that ARE have receiv'd their Beings

Beings throughout the universal Space, whether animate or inanimate, material or spiritual.

Secondly, I shall consider the Nature of Eternity and infinite Space.

Thirdly, I shall enquire into the Nature of the Punishment of the Wicked, and give my Opinion of the Place of their Torments.

Fourthly, I shall enquire into the Nature of the Creation of our Globe the Earth, and make some Remarks upon the Deluge: In all which I shall avoid the descanting upon such things as I have found before observ'd by other Authors, except where it is necessary, or else to make some further Improvements; and shall make Divine Inferences from every Particular, as they fall in Course.

Fifthly, I shall prove the Goodness of God in his Dealings with his Creatures he has given Reason and Understanding to, particularly to us, having put it in our Power to be happy for ever in a future State, and having given us to that End all imaginable Encouragements and Advantages.

Sixthly, I shall prove the *Christian* OEconomy to be the only true one now in the World.

And, *Lastly*, I shall recommend Religion and Virtue to every one's Choice.

S E C T. I.

*Of a necessary, self-existent, independent
and eternal Being.*

WHEN I form my Conceptions of an Eternity past, I find it much easier to believe and conceive a necessary, self-existent, independent, and eternal Being, than to imagine any Beings produced out of the Gulf of Eternity by blind Chance; which, if allow'd of, must be a necessary Agent, which is a plain Contradiction in Terms; for that which is a necessary Agent must have a Power to *act*; and Chance acts not, but is consequent upon Action; therefore if any thing be *acted*, it must be by the *Power* of an *Actor*; or, in other Words, if any thing be *made*, it must have a *Maker*: And therefore, had there not been an infinitely wise and powerful, self-existent, independent and eternal Being, the whole universal Space must have continued in utter Darknefs, without *Matter* or *material Bodies* interspers'd; such as the glorious *Sun*, *Fixed Stars*, and their concomitant *Planets*, with their various and numerous Inhabitants. But to go no further than our selves: That we find our selves in Being is undeniable, but how we came into Being we know not, nor had we any Hand in procuring it, but were produced

produced in Time; we must therefore receive our Beings from a Being that is eternal; and our Existence not being in our selves, we must therefore exist in a Being that is self-existent; and our Dependance not being upon our selves, we must therefore depend upon a Being that is independent: So that it is as absurd to deny the Being of a God, as it would be to deny our own Beings; since without a Creator, 'tis evident, there could have been no Creature. It is with very good Reason therefore that the Psalmist calls that Man a *Fool*, who *has said in his Heart, There is no God.*

S E C T. II.

Of the Nature of Eternity and infinite Space.

NOW what Conceptions I can form of this necessary Being, and his eternal Existence, is, that his Eternity is to him as Time present, or *just now*, is to us; for Eternity admits of no Measure or Progression, as Time does; for Time is itself a Creature produced out of Eternity; so that let the Almighty begin his Creations at what Distance of Time soever, there had been an Eternity past before that Beginning; and this Beginning of Time, had it not yet been begun, could not have lengthen'd the Eternity past before the Beginning: But with respect to us, the Time past since the Beginning has Length and Duration, and so it must be to all created Be-

ings. But now the supreme infinite Being includes, in his Eternity, all things as present; as, for Instance, when he sent *Moses* to the *Israelites*, and *Moses* requir'd his Name, *Tell them*, saith the Almighty, *I AM hath sent thee*; by which Word is fully comprehended his eternal Existence. Now that this was the Son of God, who was to be our Redeemer, that spoke to *Moses*, may indeed be made a Dispute and Cavil by those who will not allow his Divinity; but our blessed Saviour's own Expression to the *Jews*, *Before Abraham was, I AM*, will easily solve it, as having the very same Word, and therefore the same Weight and Force in it: For had our Saviour been a Being created in Time, (as some have had the Boldness to assert) he would not have us'd that emphatical Expression, which can imply no less than eternal Existence, viz. *Before Abraham was, I AM*: On the contrary, he must have said, *Before Abraham was, I was*; and as such an Expression would as naturally have shewn him to have had a Creation as it did *Abraham*, so the Expression *I AM* does as naturally shew his eternal Existence.

Now when we consider the Works of the supreme, infinite, and eternal Being, (who out of Eternity produced Time, and out of infinite Space produced Place) we may be convinced that they are of no Use to himself, but to his Creatures only: But whether the whole Creation of every thing was produced

duc'd at once, or when this Globe in particular, which we inhabit, was created, is a Question, which, after all Researches, cannot be known in this State; tho' some have believ'd on the negative. All those glorious Bodies of the fixed Stars are indeed, with very good Reason, believ'd to be so many Suns, with Planets revolving about them, with various and numerous Inhabitants, rational and irrational; and some have question'd whether the whole universal Space may not be thoroughly interspers'd and furnish'd with like heavenly Bodies, because, notwithstanding their vast Distances from us, besides what we can discover by the naked Eye, there are every Day more and more discover'd by good Glasses. Now whether *any* or *all* of these were created before this Earth or Solar System of ours, or *all* together with it, is in vain to seek to determine; since 'twas all one to the Almighty Creator whether he began all this Work at once, or at different Times, for so I may call it, because Time must commence to all created Beings at the Time of their Creation: 'Tis sufficient to us that we find ourselves launch'd into Being, which we may from hence look upon as an eternal one, it having been the Pleasure of our Creator to endue us with immortal Souls, which, during their Stay in these Bodies, are capable of searching into and admiring the rest of his wonderful Works, and if truly prepar'd for their Exit from them,

shall then be made perfect in all Knowledge, and fully enjoy this supreme Infinite, than which nothing less can satisfy the unbounded Desires of the Soul, or yield her true Happiness : And as the Soul is more or less spiritually refined here, so much the more or less will she be capable to receive those unlimited Enjoyments. These Treasures we cannot too much covet and breathe after ; for the more we *hunger and thirst after Righteousness*, the more nourishing will the *Bread and Water of Life* be ; or the more we seek to be familiar with the Works of the Great Creator, and covet to have those things made plain to us, which now we *only see as thro' a glass darkly*, and thereby *have our conversation in heaven*, and spiritually breathe and long after it, having lodg'd our *Treasures* and our *Hearts* there ; I say, the greater Attainments we make herein, the greater Felicities will await our Reception there ; and the more spiritual Virtues we carry thither, the brighter will our Souls shine with them.

N o w as to the universal Space being thoroughly interspers'd or furnish'd with heavenly Bodies, I am, for my own Part, apt to judge on the negative ; else there are no Bounds to the Creation, which I think has Bounds as well as Time, or we make the Works of the Creation infinite. 'Tis true, we cannot put Bounds to his Power, which is unlimited : God fills the universal Space ; but to imagine that he has
thoroughly

thoroughly interspers'd it with heavenly Bodies, (which if so must be infinite) is almost the same as to imagine he has never been without Creatures; and that no Creature could be from Eternity, is manifest from its very Creation; and tho' God may have had Creatures ten Thousand times ten Thousand Millions of this World's Ages before its Creation, yet all things created must necessarily have a Beginning: From which I would infer, that it is still most probable that there are Bounds to the material Creation, and still an universal Space unfurnish'd or uninterspers'd with heavenly and material Bodies, and may be to all Eternity, tho' God should ever continue to create new Suns and Planets at never so great Distance, which still make the Room never the less for more; for universal Space, like Eternity, admits no Beginning nor End; and every Body therein created is still exactly in the middle of *it**, just as Time present is to Eternity: For supposing a Body to move in a strait Line with the greatest Velocity imaginable, even as swift as Lightning or Light from the Sun, when it has moved with this Swiftneſs Millions of Ages, 'tis no nearer the End of infinite Space, but the

* Hence it is that every Part of the Surface of Globes does agreeably attract its proper Inhabitants, and that the Inhabitants on every Side do agreeably graviate to its Centre, and in their Walking observe a Posture accordingly.

same, as to it, as if it had stood perfectly still all the while : Similar to which is God's Eternity, which admits of neither Measure nor Progression ; for his Eternity past can never be lengthen'd, no more than his Eternity to come can be shorten'd ; and therefore his Existence has been, is, and will be always the same, and is therefore fully express'd in his comprehensive *Name, I AM.*

N o w the late Discoveries from the Principles of Sir *Isaac Newton*, concerning the fixed Stars being so many Suns, with Planets revolving round them, and respecting them as their Centres, and receiving Light and Heat from them, afford us very great Matter of Admiration of the wonderful Works of the *Great Creator*, as containing in them, I think, more than a bare Probability of Truth : For to what End must all these glorious Bodies be created, if not for further Uses than only to be serviceable to us on this Globe ? Is not the Moon more useful to us than them all ? And of how much less Substance is she than any other visible Bodies ? but by being placed nearer, and being an Attendant upon our Globe, is of more particular Use to us than all the other heavenly Bodies (the Sun only excepted) put together : Tho' I doubt not but that God has not made even it for our Use only, but has suitable Inhabitants there, to whom our Globe, which is so much larger, is more serviceable than it to us. And herein is Matter of Wonder, Praise, and

and Admiration of the great Creator and Contriver of the Universe, not to make *any thing* for its own particular Use only, but as far as it is consistent with one Body's serving another, so far, in all Probability, they are made useful to one another, as if they had each of them been design'd for no other Use but to be serviceable to the other.

T H U S the Antients not dreaming but that all the Works of the Creation had been only made on purpose for our Use and Benefit, and considering the vast Distances of the fixed Stars and Planets, and how much more it might have amounted to our Benefit, if only our Globe had been design'd to have been enlighten'd thereby, had they been placed nearer to it; and from thence concluding that God design'd something more useful to Mankind thereby (believing them to be made only for Man's Use) ascrib'd several Influences to 'em, as to all human Affairs and Occurrences, from whence arose several Pretenders to understand their Natures and Influences; as Fortune-tellers, Answerers of Horary Questions, Calculators of Nativities, and the like; which to this Day is not quite extinguished, but practis'd by some few idle People: Tho' the late Itch of scribbling Nonsense, Yearly and Monthly Prognosticators, News-Foretellers, and Weather Predicters, begin now to lose Ground amongst us, being scandalous, and of very little Repute with Men of the best Understanding.

Others

Others of the Ancients have upon the same Principles ador'd the Heavenly Bodies as Deities, and paid Divine Honours to 'em; but as it has pleased God to make known to us, in this latter Age, the nobler Uses he design'd them for, (which Knowledge seems to have been reserv'd for these Sceptical Days) as this Knowledge furnishes us with Matter of Admiration and Wonder, so it is sufficient to silence all Atheism and Infidelity; which indeed had never appear'd in the World, had not Immorality and Vice been the Nurseries of them; for those who involve themselves in Wickedness, often fly to Atheism as a Shelter for themselves from the Dread of Hell and the Thoughts of a future Reckoning. And this brings me to enquire into the Nature of the Punishment of the Wicked, and to give my Opinion of the Place of their Torments.

S E C T. III.

Of the Punishment of the Wicked, and Place of Hell.

THIS dismal State is represented to us in Scripture, by *Fire and Brimstone*, which, though indeed 'tis most terrifying to our present Senses. yet can never sufficiently represent the Terrors of that dreadful State; for as much
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as Spirit exceeds Matter, so much does spiritual Fire, or the Terrors of a Soul banish'd *all* Felicities, and consign'd over to the most inexpressible Miseries, exceed all possible Representations of *material Fire*. That material Fire, properly so call'd, cannot act immediately upon immaterial Substances, as the Devils are, I do not now argue; but that their Torment will be as great at least, as that of material Fire upon material Substances, is not to be doubted; for the *everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels* must necessarily very grievously affect *them*. As to the Place of Hell, as we call it, I take it to be an Exilement from all manner of Place, in the usual Notion of that Word, and to be a Confinement in a Vacuum or the universal Space, where there is no Matter to collect and reflect any of the Rays of Light of the Heavenly Luminaries; so that the Sun and Stars darting their Rays through, and meeting with nothing to reflect their Rays upon, there is consequently nothing but a pitchy Darknes: And now will not this alone be a dismal State, if there were no other positive Torments, where those who are consign'd over to it have not the least Hope left of ever recovering Light or Place of Rest?

This is that dismal Place, or rather Imprisonment from all manner of Place, represented to us in the Scriptures as a *Bottomless Pit*, and *outer Darknes*, which is very agreeable to the *aforesaid* Notions; for, as a *Bottomless Pit*, it
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is agreeable to a Banishment from Place, or, in other Words, from the Body of *any Globe* and its *Atmosphere*, into the *Vacuum* of the universal Space; the Extent whereof is such, as I have shew'd, that nothing can come nearer its End, tho' it has never so rapid a Motion, no, were it even as quick as Thought or Imagination itself, and continued to never so long a Duration: So that this may properly enough be call'd a *Bottomless Pit*; and dismal *outer Darknefs* must also attend it, as it is out of the way of any thing to receive, collect, or reflect any of the Light of the glorious heavenly Bodies. In this tremendous State is both temporal and spiritual Darknefs, no Righteousness to shine in these doleful Regions, no more than material Lights to attend them; for that *spiritual Light*, which is ready to be afforded, by *Christ*, to *every one that comes into the World*, the Inhabitants of these dismal Regions have wilfully lost, by *chusing Darknefs rather than Light, because their Deeds were evil*. This is, then, such a Destruction from the Presence of the *Lord* and his *Light*, as must certainly be attended with dismal Anguish and Horror to those exil'd to it: Their Consciences too will then reproach and sting them with Remorse; they will then reflect upon the Evils they have done, and cannot help it; this Worm that dieth not will continually gnaw and fret their guilty Minds, and never let them be at Ease and Quiet; and the Reflection upon
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the infinite Loss of Heaven, and their everlasting Exclusion from the unspeakable Happiness of that blessed State, and their Deprivation of the Sight of the Beatific Vision, and the Want of the heavenly Society, *viz.* God and Christ, and the blessed Saints and Angels, will fill them with inexpressible Torment. The Devils, as Spirits, may be able to affect Spirits, and so afflict the Souls of Men, as well as Bodies do Bodies: For since our blessed Saviour plainly says, that *the Wicked shall go into everlasting Fire prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels*, we may be assur'd that there is in Hell a Fire, tho' not material, yet such as shall as much, if not more, affect those who shall be consign'd over to that dreadful State; so that it will be such an one as will execute God's Design of punishing both wicked Angels and wicked Men. And now let wicked Men consider what a woful Bargain they make, when they foolishly chuse Vice before Religion and Virtue: Let 'em think what an unspeakable Torment the Reflection upon their past Sins, and the wilful Neglect of their Duty, will fill their Minds with; what terrible Anguish and Horror will then seize them; what Madness and Despair will possess them; what a monstrous Pile of Fire they are raising to burn, but not consume them; for *there the Worm dies not*, as our Saviour tells us, *and the Fire is not quenched.*

Now

Now the very Nature of Virtue and Spiritual-mindedness leads to Happiness, even in this Life, and the contrary to Misery ; for *to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace* : For Carnality of itself sinks us below the aspiring after heavenly Objects, fixes our Minds on the World and sensual Pleasures, whereby we come to doat so much upon the Pursuit of our beloved Sensualities, that our Hearts at last become so intent upon them, that their Happiness is fixed in them : And since these earthly Treasures and sensual Enjoyments are fading and transitory, and can last no longer than our present Lives ; and since no Treasures are thereby laid up for the Soul, (for these are only useful to our Bodies) we are sure to lose all when we leave *these* : Whereas if we raise our Souls to a spiritual Temper, and pursue true Virtue with a heavenly Disposition, and regard the *things of the Spirit* more than those *of the Flesh*, we may assure our selves we are laying up such Treasures as will be durable and lasting, even to all Eternity. And how much must the Satisfaction of a spiritual Mind be even in *this* Life ? 'Tis sufficient to support us under the greatest outward Calamities and Afflictions ; and all the Riches, Pleasures, and Honours of the World cannot equal it ; equal it, did I say ? nay, nor stand in the least Competition with it, where *they* are *only* enjoy'd without this Spiritual-mindedness : This will make the
Mind

Mind of a Man or Woman easy and chearful, and their Countenance lively ; for true Virtue never shews itself in affected sanctified Looks, an artificial turning of the Eyes, wry Mouths, wrinkling of Faces, or whining Speeches, which are *chiefly* Tokens of Hypocrisy, or at least a Want of true Understanding of the Nature of Religion and Virtue, which in its own Nature renders Men *bold as a Lion*, courteous, free and affable ; whereas the contrary makes them fearful and timorous, sneaking and dejected, and oftentimes fills them with Confusion.

Indeed there are some bold presumptuous Sinners, that have set Integrity and Uprightness, Religion and Virtue at open Defiance, and reign and act triumphantly, as if they had entirely subdued them, together with the Apprehension of a future Reckoning. These, in the Height and Heat of the Pursuit of their Lusts and Passions, may indeed, for the Time, have little Sense or Apprehension of their present Danger ; but should Afflictions and Troubles come upon them, and especially Death threaten to overtake them, how will they stand it then ? Will not the Terrors of Conscience awaken them out of their former Security ? Will they not then dread the Consequences of their former imaginary Conquests ? Will not Fear and Anguish come speedily upon them ? Will not their Countenances then change Colour, and a fearful Trembling seize
C them ?

them? Now must the Minister (though before contemn'd and slighted) be sent for to administer all possible Comfort to the seeming Penitent. But what has brought it to this? Now must conquer'd Virtue be courted by the Conqueror to accept of his Submission: Conqueror, did I say? No, no, thou only didst imagine thy self so; for tho' Religion and Virtue may have suffer'd themselves for a Time to be trampled upon, yet whenever they please to assume their Strength and Authority, they have many Assistants ready that can curb the Insolence of all their Enemies, and if they cannot in time reclaim them, yet can punish the Rebellions of their most insulting Desperadoes: Nay, even the boldest Sinners of 'em all, upon Surprise, are ready to flee when none pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion; and tho' Calamities, Losses, and Crosses shall attend the Righteous, and they may be for the present somewhat dejected through natural Infirmary and Frailty, yet the Serenity of their Minds and inward Peace of their Consciences will still subsist, and support them under all the Storms that happen from without: A Resignation to God's Will will rid 'em of all unreasonable Fears, and persuade them to believe that all things shall end well, if not to their present, yet to their future Advantage: Influenced by this comfortable Persuasion, they will chearfully and patiently wait the Event, preferring evermore future spiritual
good

good things, before all present and temporal, and regarding temporal Evils as only transitory, and of which they shall soon see an End.

THESE may truly be compar'd to the wise Virgins, who were ready at the Call of the Bridegroom ; as the Wicked who have their Oil to seek at the same Call, may be to the foolish Virgins, who, notwithstanding their Knocking and Importunity, were yet shut out, because too late ; for this Door being once shut upon them, admits no opening for ever. When once they shall be thus excluded from all manner of Place, Light, or Ease, thus banish'd into the doleful Regions of outer Darkness (after the Resurrection of the Body) then will all the Terrors of Body and Mind seize them, with perpetual Reflections upon their past Follies, for not embracing Mercy when it was offer'd, in not regarding Futurity and its precious Treasures, till they could no longer enjoy their Sensualities : And Religion and Virtue, the best Refuge and Security, the only Means of escaping eternal Punishment, can now be of no Service : The Enjoyment of the heavenly State, which now they wish for, and had heard so much of, cannot be expected ; for not being calculated to their Sensualities, and the Company of that Place being no ways agreeable to their wicked Dispositions, it would be impossible for them to relish 'em ; and were they then to be entertain'd in Heaven, the

Enjoyments of that happy State would be so contrary and disagreeable to their contracted vicious Habits, that they could not bear them: So that could they be admitted, it would be no proper Place for them; their own Sensualities and vicious Habits having render'd them absolutely unfit for Abode there.

Wherefore let all wicked Men now consider, that those who are not fitted for Heaven, by a timely Preparation and a Disposition habituated to Virtue, will have no Entertainment there; the Door will be shut upon them, and they will be excluded that Place of Comfort, Ease and Rest, and shut out into *outer Darknefs*, agreeable to their Works of Darknefs; and as their Works here would not bear the Light, so their Eyes cannot there behold it.

Oh! that you would therefore consider these things in time, and *turn to the Lord while he may be found*, and change your Inclinations and Tempers, before they become incapable of having such a Change wrought in them; for the longer you continue in Sin, the harder it will be to change and repent, and if delay'd may be impossible.

S E C T.

S E C T. IV.

Of the Creation and Deluge.

I Come now to consider something in relation to the Creation of our Globe the Earth, with the State of the Antediluvians, and enquire into the Reasons of their Destruction by the Deluge, and to give my Opinion of those natural Causes that concurr'd to fulfil the Divine Appointment therein; and from thence I shall make some useful Inferences.

I have before proved that all things created must receive their Beings from a necessary, self-existent, and eternal Being: I shall now endeavour to shew the Wisdom and Goodness of this eternal Being in the Creation of our Globe (which Wisdom and Goodness is undoubtedly agreeable in every Part of his Creations). Now it appears by his reveal'd Account hereof by his Servant *Moses*, That *in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*, that is, the Substance or Matter of them; which Substance remain'd in a confus'd chaotical Condition, without Order or Form; and how long it had remain'd so e'er God gave it the Laws of Gravitation and Attraction, whereby every of its Parts did take their Places according to their specefick Gravities, we find not mention'd; but that it continued so

for some time, appears from the ensuing Words, *And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep* : From which Mr. *Whiston*, in his *Theory of the Earth*, probably imagin'd this Globe, before its Formation into a Planet, had been a Comet. But be this as it will, 'tis certain a Comet very much represents such a chaotical Substance, wherein there is no Order nor Form, nor any ways appears to be a habitable Body, but is capable by an Almighty *Fiat* of being made so, having the Laws of Gravitation and Attraction assign'd it, as above-mention'd, and being put into a proper Orbit at a convenient Distance from some of the glorious Luminaries. But whether this Beginning, in which our Globe had its Original, only respected it, or was the Beginning of all the material Substances of the whole Universe, is too difficult to determine. Now if it respected the Whole, yet upon Supposition of this Globe's being a Comet before its Formation into a Planet, Multitudes of the Heavenly Bodies might have had their Formations before this Earth, even at vastly distant Times ; and yet the Creation of Matter was the Beginning of Time ; and if this Beginning of Time, mention'd by *Moses*, respects the whole material Creation, then was all Matter created at the same Beginning, or at the same Time when the Matter of this Globe was, and might, at several distant Times, be made habitable Bodies. But after
all

all our Enquiries and Researches into this Matter, we must still leave the full Knowledge of these things to a future State ; the Mention of them *now* being only thus useful to us, to promote our Aspirations after that Fulness of Knowledge which we may expect when relax'd from these Fetters of Mortality.

Now that all things at their first Creation came pure out of their Maker's Hands, is an undeniable Truth, both as to the Globes and their Inhabitants ; but that God should irreversibly determine they should so continue, without Respect to the Actions of his Creatures, is very unreasonable to suppose. 'Tis very reasonable to expect that such of his Creatures as were endued with Reason and Understanding should be made capable of continuing in their original Creation, or else 'tis but Mockery to create them pure : But to create them so that they could not possibly deviate from it, is putting a Force upon their Obedience ; and forced Obedience is no Obedience, nor can such Obedience be any ways rewardable : Therefore it was highly reasonable and agreeable with infinite Wisdom to give his Creatures a Freedom of Will, and a Law to keep, with a Power also to keep it, and to offer Rewards to Obedience, and to threaten Punishments to the Disobedience of it. And this is the very same, as to us, as if God did not foresee our Obedience or Disobedience ; for tho' his Fore-knowledge cannot be hinder'd, yet it does not ne-

cessitate any of our Actions to come to pass ; but because they will come to pass, thro' our own Choice and Free-agency, he must necessarily foresee them : And after he has created all things pure, upon the Obedience of such of his Creatures who make it their Choice to obey, they are thence so firmly establish'd in their right Choice, and made so far perfect as to be in no Danger of a future Revolt ; an Instance whereof we have in the obedient and disobedient Angels.

Thus God has made his reasonable Creatures free Agents, and consequently Man ; for whose sake this Globe was created fruitful, with pure and wholesome Air to breathe in, not in the least infected with any noxious or destructive Particles, but with such pure Air as was capable of preserving the Strength from all Decays, and yet liable too to undergo such Changes as were consistent with infinite Wisdom, according to Man's Behaviour here.

Now as God had created our first Parents in a State as above related, and given them a Law, with Condition that if they kept it, both they and their Posterity should remain happy, and had threaten'd Death upon their Disobedience, we find that as soon as they had violated that Law, a strange Turn of Affairs ensued ; for the Earth hereupon, according to Mr. *Whiston*. receiv'd a diurnal Rotation, having only an annual one before ; and by this sudden Change and Shock it was broke into several Chasms and

Fissure

Fissures, from whence issued sulphurous and infectious Particles into the Atmosphere of the Air, causing it to become noxious, and by Degrees to work upon the Vitals of every Animal, and to decay their Natures, and thereby subject them to Mortality; according to God's Threatning to Man's Disobedience, *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die; that is to say, become mortal.*

Thus by the Commencement of the Earth's diurnal Rotation, we may further observe, it would necessarily cause a Rushing in the Fluidity of the Atmosphere of the Air, it not being capable presently to accompany the Solidity of the Earth on this sudden Rotation; which rushing Noise seems to be that which *Adam* calls God's Voice, which he heard in the Garden, and being self-condemn'd, and imagining that God was coming to execute immediately the Threatning due to his Transgression, ran to hide himself with his espoused Consort; for they (*Adam and Eve*) *heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day*; or, as it is in the Margin of our old Bibles, *in the wind of the day*, which gives a further Probability to this Hypothesis.

Thus we may see what a mighty Turn the Disobedience of Man brought upon Nature; the Earth, that before was fruitful of itself, now becomes barren without Tillage; the Air, that breath'd nothing but the Sweets of Immortality, now becomes noxious and decaying;
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ing; and the Nourishment of the Fruits of the Earth, thro' the infectious Air, yields not its natural Strength and Support to Nature.

And yet after all this, so much of its Strength remain'd, as afforded the Antediluvians a prodigious Longævity, much superior to what we now enjoy: So that God in this Case (like a tender Father) seem'd slow to execute the Punishment due to the Transgression, as it were with Design to see whether Forbearance and Mercies would not bring them over to Obedience to that second * Covenant made with fallen Man in Paradise: And tho' we are assur'd he foresaw what Effects these Mercies and Forbearances would have upon Mankind, yet this Dealing with them leaves them altogether without Excuse; and 'tis agreeable also to our own way of reasoning, which is first to try us with Mercies, to see whether temporal Favours will not make the Receivers in Love with the Donors of them: And this is the first Step to Obedience: But behold the Stupidity of fallen Man! Their Health and Strength, their Ease and Plenty, are turn'd to Sensuality, Lust and Luxury, and all manner of Corruptions of their Ways before God. Their Hearts were wholly set upon their Pleasures, and Riches and Honours (we may rea-

* The Terms whereof are fully contain'd in the *Whole Duty of Man.*

sonably suppose) were likewise their Pursuit; for these things once attain'd, were very considerably more durable *then* than they are *now*: They might *then* wait an hundred or two hundred Years, or more, for Places of Honour and Preferment, and enjoy them several hundreds afterwards, and, upon this Expectation, might spare no Pains necessary to be us'd, for the Attainment of their Ends and Aims: For what if it was an hundred and fifty or two hundred Years Pains, or upwards, the future Satisfaction upon the Attainment of their Ends, the Prospect of Duration in the Enjoyment of them, they thought a sufficient Compensation of their Trouble. And thus by abusing the Mercies of God's Long-suffering, by turning all their Thoughts into Carnality, and being wholly sunk into the Pursuit of sensual Pleasures, (so that none of the Antediluvians were found righteous before God, except *Noah* and his Family) therefore *it came to pass that it repented the Lord that he had made Man, and it grieved him at the heart.* Thus the Almighty condescends to express himself to our Apprehensions and Capacities, as if he had the same Affections and Passions as Men have: And so in like manner in his Dealings with us, he uses the very same Method, agreeably to our own Uses and Customs with one another; first trying us by Mercies, and (if those be abus'd) giving us Correction, and if that fail of reclaiming us, he proceeds to Punishment. And
now

now the Sins of the Antediluvians having occasion'd the Lord to declare his Repentance of making Man, he *now* determines to put a Stop to the Insolencies of this ungovernable World, by a total Overthrow of the whole Human Race, except the above-mention'd Persons, who only were found *righteous* before him.

God therefore establishes his Covenant with *Noah* to preserve him and his Family alive, with a sufficient Number of all manner of Land Animals, as a Stock to replenish and re-people the New World; which afterwards he had determined to take a new Method with; for since the Longævity of the Antediluvians had had no better Effects upon them, than what is above-mentioned, God now determines to bring such a Flood upon the Earth as should still make it vastly less fruitful after its Abatement, and Men's Lives, by Degrees, after the Deluge, to be more short and uncertain: And herein is the Wisdom and Goodness of God manifest; for since Men cannot now hunt after Temporalities with the Views of very long Enjoyments, they may therefore be hereby induced to pursue the Concerns of the Soul, which lasts not for a few hundred Years only, but for Eternity: And who would not infinitely rather chuse the Pursuit of these desireable Spiritual Treasures, that will have no End nor Consumption, than those, which, were they to be enjoy'd several hundred Years, could not be fully satisfactory, and the Enjoyment thereof

thereof likewise must have an End? But now in our Pursuit of Spiritual Pleasures, we need not wait with long Expectation before we attain them; we have not an hundred and fifty, or two hundred Years to live in prospect of them: No! a very few Years will probably put us in Possession; 50, 60, or 70, are generally the most we can reckon upon, and very often they are attain'd much sooner. And now who cannot with Courage pursue these eternal Treasures for so short a Space, with more Concern and Eagerness than ever the Antediluvians did those which are temporal? If the Prospect only of enjoying the good Things of this World for a considerable Time encourag'd their Pursuit of them, how much more should the Prospect of enjoying those of the other to all Eternity, engage our Thoughts, and excite our utmost Care and Industry.

As to the Nature of the Deluge, and how the Earth thereby became more barren, and the Air still more infectious, and consequently the Life of Man more short and unhealthful, I come now to consider. And here likewise I cannot but allow Mr. *Whiston's Hypothesis* in his *Theory of the Earth* to have the best Probability of Truth, notwithstanding the Attempts which have been used to overthrow it; for even Mr. *Keil*, who wrote against it, is forc'd to acknowledge at last, that Mr. *Whiston* had made it extremely probable that a Comet did pass by the Earth at the Deluge: But as

I apprehend the Difficulty in this Hypothesis lies here, That if the Earth receiv'd such a Quantity of Waters from a Comet to drown it, and to surmount the highest Mountains by fifteen Cubits, Mr. *Whiston* had not clearly discovered the Removal of them ; but if he has not, I think he has made way for such further Improvements of his Scheme, that there is sufficient room for doing it ; which, I think, ought rather to be undertaken, than an Attempt to overthrow so seemingly great a Discovery. I shall therefore, upon the Supposition of the Comet's drowning the Earth, according to Mr. *Whiston*, endeavour to discover that the Waters left upon the Earth by the Comet might be remov'd, and the Earth become again dry, habitable, and fruitful.

Now this Comet's Atmosphere being in a chaotical Condition, all the Fluids and Solids being mix'd together, these Solids having there no Laws of Gravitation and Attraction, were jumbled together with the Fluids ; and till they receive these Laws, they make together but one perfect Fluid, having receiv'd no Order nor Form in this Body they belong to ; for even those Parts which had in themselves a Nature to become Solids, whenever God Almighty should give the *Fiat* to 'em, might before that time have the true Nature of Fluidity in them ; and yet whenever these Laws shall be assign'd them, out of this fluid Chaos there may prove to be vastly many more Particles of
So.

Solidity than those of pure Water. Thus it was said of the Creation of the Earth, when the Matter of the Earth was created, that *the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters* : So that in its chaotical Condition it is altogether call'd *Waters*, So in the same Condition we may imagine this Comet's Atmosphere to be before its involving the Earth with the Deluge, and therefore might drown it in the way and manner prescrib'd by Mr. *Whiston*, to whose Account I refer you, and shall content my self with only shewing from the aforesaid Supposition, which way the Waters might become abated, and so much dry Land remain: For I shall not here repeat what has been already done to my hand, except in such Cases as cannot well be avoided without making a Breach in the Discourse. Now as by the former Hypothesis it appears probable that the Solids and Fluids of the Comet's Atmosphere in their lawless or chaotical State were altogether Fluids ; so coming upon the Earth in this fluid Condition, immediately upon the Comet's leaving this Quantity of its Atmosphere to drown the Earth, it enters upon the same Laws peculiar to this habitable Globe, and by the Laws of Gravitation and Attraction, those Parts that had the Essence of Solidity in them assume their proper Offices, and in a Hurry begin to take their Places according to their specifick Gravities ; and the Fluid growing thick in the Hurry, many of the weightier
 Particles

Particles are stopp'd and catch'd in their Descent; and accordingly we find Metals and Minerals as it run down the Pores of the Earth in their Fluidity, and catch'd as they became Solids at uncertain Depths by other earthly Particles lighter than themselves, tho' their Endeavour was to take their Places therein according to their respective Weights; as in a Mire, the Substance whereof is lighter than Stone, yet a Stone let fall into it will not reach the Bottom; for the Fluidity thereof being thicken'd will not so easily admit of weightier Particles than itself to take their Places therein according to their specifick Gravities, notwithstanding their Endeavour so to do. That there would be a vast Quantity of solid Particles, when they assum'd their proper Essences, far exceeding those that remain'd fluid, is not difficult to imagine, (tho' all fluid, having no Distinction, before) when we consider that the new Surface of the Earth, acquir'd at the Deluge, was never yet observ'd to be penetrated thro' by the Searches into its Bowels; and, for ought we know, may very nearly equal, in its Thickness, the Depth of the Waters at the Deluge, above the common Surface: For that we have a new Crust acquir'd by the Deluge, appears from Trees, Fishes Bones, and the like, found at uncertain Depths in divers Places of this and other Nations, which in the Hurry of the settling of these Commotions were some born down below their natural Gravity,

Gravity, and others catch'd higher amongst Particles lighter than themselves; and those Particles which had only the true Essence of Water, make now their Descent into the lowest Parts of the Globe, and form a mighty Ocean; whereas before there was only a gathering together of the Waters into vast Lakes or Seas, but yet in such a manner as the whole Earth might have been travel'd over upon dry Land, Thus you see that as Mr. *Whiston's* Hypothesis brought Waters enough to drown the Earth, so by this they might be sufficiently removed*.

But

* Thus the Fluids that drown'd the Earth being in a chaotical Condition, and the true Essence of Solidity being by far the greatest Part thereof, and differently scatter'd upon the Surface of the Globe, much greater Quantities of solid Particles might remain in one Place than another; upon the settling of which it might cause a different Situation of Hills and Mountains after the Flood to what there had been before, and leave Plains and Vallies where there happen'd the fewest of Solids, and the most of that Fluid which only in itself had the true Essence of Water; which however left a sufficient Quantity of Solids to continue the Earth above the common Orbicularity of the Ocean, when it had made its Descent thereto, which before for some time might remain dispersed over the highest Mountains by the wonderful Attraction of the Comet, in the way and manner of the Tides occasion'd by the Attraction of the Moon, and would require a proportionate Time to settle in, according to the Largeness of the Comet's Body and its near Approach to the Earth, which must be in as much Disproportion as may very well account for the Uncommonness of this Hypothesis.

And as to the Hills and Mountains being occasion'd to take different Situations to those before the Flood, it may appear no Paradox, if we consider how this chaotical Substance that drown'd the Earth is differently dispersed upon the Surface of it,

But then the Earth wants new Furniture of Herbs, Plants, Fruit-Trees, and the like, and yet we read of no new Creation; whence is it supplied? My Answer is, That it seems highly probable, that the Seeds of Herbs, Fruits of Trees, with the several Kinds of Grain, and the like, would be scatter'd and dispers'd upon the Waters; upon the settling of which sufficient Quantities would remain upon the Surface of the dry Land, and produce their Species.

And now the new Surface of the Earth being fresh, fat, and fertile, it must produce Fruits almost equal to those of the Antediluvian World, and by Virtue whereof the Lives of the first Patriarchs, succeeded the Deluge, were almost equivalent to those of the old World; but the Commotions and sulphureous Effluvia's which were occasion'd by the Deluge, by De-

so as to afford it different Minerals in different Countries distant from one another, and to be disposed of according to the Wisdom of God, in their Directions to place themselves after the Laws aforesaid; which shew, that the Fluid and Solids that made that entire Fluid to drown the Earth, had not in their chaotical State an equal Distribution of Parts common to it: real Contents, but they were dispersed in this chaotical Condition in so confused a manner, that Hills and Mountains, Metals and Minerals might disperse themselves in different Situations, as we find they have; which must plainly shew, that as chaotical a Substance drown'd the Earth, as that was from which at first it was form'd. So then from this Hypothesis, in the Earth's first Formation Hills and Mountains might receive their Original in and from the Causes here propos'd, without being fixed upon such a Fluid as Mr. *Whiston* imagin'd them to have had their Original from.

grees

grees gather Strength, and form themselves into destructive Particles, causing Tempests, Hurricanes, Thunder and Lightning, and the like, hitherto unknown, which by Degrees disperse themselves thro' the Atmosphere of the Air, which hereby becomes more and more noxious and unwholsome to breathe in, and works Decays of the Earth's Fertility; and accordingly shortens the Lives of their future Progeny, by such Degrees, and in such a Manner, as God judged necessary; even as the new World became in a Condition to be re-peopled, without a Continuation of the former Longævity.

Thus I have given an Account of the Deluge, and observ'd God's Design in shortning Man's Days upon Earth, *viz.* to wean his Affections from it. Those therefore who will still set their Affections on the World, do thwart God's Design, and hazard the Loss of their Souls, for vain, short, and unsatisfactory Enjoyments: But because the Minds of some Men are induc'd by temporal Motives, and the Promises of present worldly Blessings, more than the Views of future Rewards; therefore, in Condescension to human Infirmities, God Almighty was pleased to make large Offers of temporal Blessings to his People the *Jews*; so that to their Obedience all temporal Blessings were promised, as Punishments were also threatned to their Disobedience. But tho' this Covenant did more peculiarly relate to the

Jewish Nation, yet many private Persons have, and to this Day do persuade themselves, that their temporal Felicities distinguish them as the Favourites of Heaven, and are Tokens of God's special Regard and particular Favour to them more than others who want them, and hence are so lifted up as even to despise those in low and mean Circumstances, as if they were cast off and rejected by their Maker: But Prosperity is not always a certain Mark of God's Favour, some now enjoying it, who, their Practice consider'd, do not deserve it; whilst others suffer Adversity, who, their good Conversation consider'd, might hope to be exempted from it: So that in short from Prosperity and Adversity in this World, we cannot infer an unerring Conclusion of our Favour or Disfavour with God. And even amongst the *Jews*, under the Dispensation aforesaid, we find things otherwise understood by the most religious and virtuous amongst them, and that the Righteous oftentimes extremely suffer'd; that they have had * *trials of mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and Imprisonments; that they were stoned, sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; that they wander'd about in sheep-skins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy): they wan-*

* Hebr. xi. 36, 37, 38.

der'd in desarts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And yet notwithstanding this they were still in God's peculiar Favour, who had reserv'd for them better things than this World could afford. So that the Riches and Honours of this World of themselves, as I said, are no certain Marks of God's Favour, nor Poverty and Disgrace of themselves no certain Tokens of his Displeasure. These things happen in common to the Righteous and the Wicked. Indeed, as to Communities, or Commonwealths and Kingdoms, it generally happens otherwise; and they are commonly prosperous and flourishing, or the contrary, according to their Adherence to Virtue and Religion, or to Vice and Irreligion. But whatever the Prosperity or Adversity of private Persons may be, they may, if they will, make a proper Use and Improvement of them with respect to the World to come: If a prosperous State be managed with Religion and Prudence; if Ambition is restrain'd, and the World not made an Idol; if our Affections are not too much fixed upon our prosperous Circumstances, to the Neglect of the things of Eternity; if we use our Riches as only lent us to do good with, by *feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, &c.* we shall thereby lay up for our selves a Treasure which will never fade; and thus our present temporal Blessings shall also turn to eternal ones. But again; if we be in a State of Adversity, if God has
not

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not bestow'd on us those temporal Advantages which others enjoy, or by the common Accidents of all human Affairs, has taken away what we formerly were possess'd of; let us not however be unbecomingly dejected, but firmly believe that if we use our honest Endeavours, practise Religion and Virtue, and preserve a good Conscience, God will assist and relieve us, raise us up Friends, and find out such Methods as we cannot foresee or expect. And of the Truth of all this both Scripture and Experience furnish us with many pregnant Instances: For tho God has sometimes suffer'd the Righteous to fall into great Troubles and Afflictions, yet upon their patient continuing in Well-doing they many times have been raised again, and sometimes too to a much higher Pitch of Prosperity; witness *Joseph* in *Egypt*, and *Job* in the Land of *Uz*.

S E C T. V.

Of Election and Reprobation.

UPON the second Covenant, which God enter'd into with Mankind, he put it into every Man's Power that comes into the World, to make choice of Virtue, and by so doing to render himself acceptable to God thro' Christ our Redeemer. As to the Heathens, who have no Knowledge of Christ and of the
Covenant

Covenant which God, thro' him, has made with us, though what is not reveal'd will not be requir'd, yet they must account for their Actions according to the best Law they have, that is, the Law of Nature, and for the good Use or Abuse of that Freedom of Will which God has in common given them. 'Tis true, God will have a Regard to Justice and Equity, and will doubtless make Allowances for invincible Ignorance, and the Prejudices of Education, which for want of Means and Opportunities could not be rectified: But still so far as their Light reaches, and the Will is concern'd, they must be accountable. What will be requir'd therefore of the Heathen World, that have not had the Happiness of God's Will being reveal'd to them, is, that they should act according to the Law of Reason and the Dictates of natural Conscience; and as their Acts of Free-will have been according this Rule, or otherwise, they will be either condemn'd or acquitted at the Day of Judgment.

Thus God will approve himself a righteous Judge, and will at last make it appear to Men and Angels, that all Kingdoms, Nations, and Languages shall be judg'd according to Justice and Equity, and agreeably to their own Choices of Virtue or Vice. Then it will be clear, that the Ruin of the Wicked is of and from themselves; and that God had not doom'd his Creatures to a wretched State before their Creation, (as some very unjustly endeavour to re-

present) but that he created them with the same Powers to have made Religion and Virtue, and consequently Happiness, their Choice, and that their Wills had the same Freedom, as those had who did really chuse them.

I am not insensible that some have alledg'd the Authority of the holy Scripture against the Doctrine I have asserted, and several Texts have been urged by some rigid People in Opposition to it. I shall apply my self to shew that those Texts of Scripture (which some through want of a right Understanding of 'em have wrested) do not assert what they alledge, *viz.* a personal Election and Reprobation from God's eternal Decrees; and particularly that the Ninth Chapter of St. *Paul's* Epistle to the *Romans* does by no Means prove it.

Now as such an Interpretation of a personal Election and Reprobation does reflect on the infinite Justice and Goodness of God, is vastly prejudicial to Religion and Virtue, is contrary to the main Design of them, and very repugnant to other Places of Scripture; I shall therefore endeavour to make it appear from this very Chapter, that the Apostle is herein maintaining a contrary Doctrine to what these rigid Men maintain.

In order to the right understanding of this Chapter, 'tis necessary, in the first Place, to consider what was the Apostle's main Scope, Tendency, and Design in it. Now in the beginning of it, we find him in a strong and violent

violent Concern for his Brethren according to to the Flesh, for whose sake he cou'd have been content to have suffer'd the most severe Punishments in the World, in order to bring them over to Christ; for as dear as Life was to him, if he might hereby obtain this End, viz. their Salvation, he cou'd have been content to have laid down his Life for them, which is the highest Instance of Christian Charity: *For greater love than this hath no man, that one lay down his life for his friend:* So that he hereby expresse his extremely passionate Concern for his Brethren, Kinsmen, and Relations according to the Flesh, and endeavours to persuade them that the Arguments he was going to make use of, proceeded from his great Affection and Concern for their spiritual Welfare, and therefore ought not to be slighted and disregarded as Things of little moment. His main Design therefore being to convince them that, notwithstanding their Advantages of Birth and Descent which they gloried in, it would be of no Service to them, so long as they rejected the glorious Dispensation of the Gospel: And since they insisted that God's Mercies did solely belong to them, from his Promises to their Forefathers; therefore this Chapter is almost wholly spent to convince them to the contrary, that though they were *Abraham's* Seed, &c. which he allows at large, *ver. 4, 5.* but denies, *ver. 6.* that *that* can give them a Title to the Promises made to *Abraham*; *For they*

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they are not all Israel, which are of Israel :

Ver. 7. Neither because they are the Seed of Abraham, are they all children, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

Abraham had several other Children besides Isaac, yet to Isaac was the Promise made, that according to the Flesh Christ should come; In whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Therefore those that believe in Christ, and only those, are Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise : For,

Ver. 8. They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

Ver. 9. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son : To whose Line Christ was promised.

Ver. 10. And when Rebecca also had conceived, of two, by Isaac.

Ver. 11. For the children not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand. not of works, but of him that calleth ;

Ver. 12. It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

Ver. 13. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.

In these Verses is shewn God's Choice of Jacob the Son of Isaac, that from his Loins should proceed the promised Messias, but not from Esau's. This is therefore God's Election of Jacob before he was born, to give him the
Pre-

Preference, which is to be understood only as a temporal Advantage, and which indeed he enjoy'd accordingly ; for he got both the Birth-right and Blessing. This Election therefore, or Choice, which God made of *Jacob* rather than of *Esau*, only respected his temporal Prosperity, and the Promise of Christ from his Family ; but not a total Rejection of *Esau* with respect to a future State : So that when God is said to love *Jacob*, and hate *Esau*, 'tis only a comparative Way of speaking ; and the Word *hate* can only signify less Love shew'd to *Esau* in respect of temporal Privileges : Thus was *Jacob* said to love *Rachel* and hate *Leah* ; which could certainly signify no more than less Love for her ; and because he had an extraordinary Love to *Rachel*, his small Love to *Leah* was comparatively counted Hatred. As to spiritual Advantages, and the Happiness of a future State, I make no doubt *Esau* had an equal Right with *Jacob* ; and as for the Expression, that *Esau* found no place of repentance, tho' he sought it carefully with tears, it is plain, that it respects only the Irrecoverableness of his Birth-right, which had entitled *Jacob* and his Posterity to the fruitful Land of *Canaan* ; whereas the Dominions of *Esau* and his Posterity were the barren Mountains of Mount *Seir*.

Ver. 14. *What shall we say then, Is there unrighteousness with God ? God forbid.*

That is, God may justly bestow his temporal Blessings on whom he pleases ; for he certainly

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tainly best knows *when* to bestow them, and upon *whom*, and what Use will be made of them; and since our spiritual Welfare is the chief End of our Beings, and what God chiefly aims at, we ought not to conceive God acts unjustly.

Ver. 15. *For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*

At this time *Moses* had been pleading the *Jews* Prerogative and special Title to his Favour, when God through their Rebellions had threatned their Destruction, saying, *Let me alone, that I may destroy them in a moment.* Now *Moses* hereupon argues, that he could not destroy them but be guilty of the Breach of his Promises to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; and therefore, notwithstanding their Rebellions, he was bound to be merciful to them in the most peculiar manner. The *Jews* also in Dispute with the Apostle seem to make these Reasonings their Defence against complying with any other Dispensation than the *Mosaic*; and that on account of the Privileges of their Parentage, God could not justly remove his Mercies from them, to bestow them upon any other Nation or People: Wherefore the Case being alike in the Reasoning of *Moses* with God, and the *Jews* with the Apostle, the Apostle quotes God's Answer as sufficient to remove their Dependence upon their Descent and Parentage; *I will have mercy on whom I will have*

have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion ; that is, My Mercies are not so confin'd to them, if they be rebellious, as to preserve them from my Justice : I have Mercy in Store for other Nations as well as they, even for all that fear me ; and can justly punish the Rebellions of those with whom my Covenant is establish'd, and shew Mercy to those that fear me, of what Generation or Nation soever : As the Blessed Virgin very well explains it, His mercies are on them that fear him throughout all generations.

Ver. 16. So then it is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

In the Explication of this Text, I shall make use of the Words of a learned Divine of my Acquaintance, viz.

“ Here is a plain Reference to the Case of
“ *Abraham, Isaac, and Esau. Abraham willed*
“ that the Blessings to be derived to Mankind
“ by Christ, who was to descend from his
“ Loins, should come by *Ismael* ; and *Isaac*
“ *willed* and intended the Blessing for *Esau* ;
“ and *Esau ran* to get the Venison, and to obtain the Blessing : But since temporal Blessings
“ are the Donation of God, who bestows them
“ as he pleases, and this in particular was purely
“ an Act of God's Favour, who appointed *Jacob*
“ to be the Person who should receive it ;
“ therefore, in Allusion hereto, the Apostle
“ says this Blessing is not of or from him that
“ *willeth,*

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“ *willeth, as Abraham or Isaac, who willed as*
 “ *above; nor of or from him that runneth, as*
 “ *Esau did; but of or from God that sheweth*
 “ *Mercy, or bestows his temporal Blessings as*
 “ *he thinks fit. ”*

Ver. 17. *For the scripture saith unto Pha-
 raoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised
 thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and
 that my name might be declared throughout all
 the earth.*

Ver. 18. *Therefore hath he mercy on whom
 he will have mercy, and whom he will he
 hardeneth.*

This Instance of God's dealing with *Pha-
 raoh* the Apostle brings in as an Example of
 God's Justice and Judgments upon a continued
 Rebellion and Disobedience, whereby Men may
 bring themselves into such a harden'd State,
 through their own Fault, that all the Means
 whether of Mercies or Judgments are thrown
 away upon them: And such a State he look'd
 upon many of his Brethren the *Jews* to be, at
 least, in Danger of, if not altogether irreclaim-
 able; as was also the Case of *Jerusalem*, when
 our Saviour beheld it and wept over it, saying,
If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this
thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace;
but now they are hid from thine eyes. By which
 it appears, that by a long Course of Disobedi-
 ence and Rebellion a Man may sin past his Day
 of Grace, and be so far harden'd that neither
 Mercies nor Judgments will reclaim him, so that
 he

he may provoke God to withdraw from him the Strivings of his Spirit ; for *his Spirit shall not always strive with man* : Wherefore St. Paul gives such of the *Jews* a caution (whom he hop'd were yet reclaimable) in this Instance of *Pharaoh*, who being harden'd thro' a Course of continued Wickedness, and become irreclaimable, God chuses him as a fit Instrument, not only to shew him his Power, whose Authority he had so long despis'd, but also to make him an Example to all the Earth ; which Example the Apostle willeth the *Jews* to remember, lest God should also, by their continued Rebelions and Resistances of the Methods of their Salvation, make them also the like terrible Examples of his Justice and Judgments.

Not that God intentionally harden'd *Pharaoh*, even in the Judgments that he sent upon *Egypt*, and by the Removal of them ; but foreseeing what Effects these Judgments and Mercies would have upon him, God therefore foretels *Moses* the Events of them, when he says to *Moses*, *I will harden Pharaoh's heart, or permit it to be so harden'd, that he shall not let Israel go* : So that it is as if he had said, I know that the Means I shall use with *Pharaoh*, through his own Abuse, will harden his Heart so that he will not let *Israel* go. Wherefore, as there are some such Objects of his Justice and Displeasure, that have by a long Course of Disobedience and Rebellion excluded themselves from Mercy, does it follow that he shall have
Mercy

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Mercy upon none? And because the *Jews* may be cast off upon the aforesaid Account, shall not the Gentiles receive Mercy that accept of its Offers? Yes, certainly, if the *Jews* refuse the Offers of his Mercy in Christ, and the Gentiles accept them, he will have Mercy on the one, and must necessarily leave the other to a harden'd corrupt Will. Thus has he *mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

Ver. 19. *Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? or, as some translate it, Who hath disobey'd his law?*

Now the Nature of this Objection, which the Apostle foresees would be readily made against him, may be this; If God has set up a new Dispensation, which neither we nor our Fathers were acquainted with, unto which alone he has promised to shew Mercy, what becomes of the Privileges and Advantages of the Covenant made with our Fathers, which we were born Heirs to, and therefore rely upon? And if God reject us for this, because we will not accept of new Terms, which our Fathers knew not, how can he find fault with us, who keep close to the Law and the Covenants formerly deliver'd to them? with respect to which how or wherein have we disobey'd his Law, or resisted his Will?

In

In Answer to this Objection, the Apostle in the next Verse endeavours to silence all such Cavils, by shewing, that God, who formed us, has the sole Power of governing us, and giving us such Laws as are only consistent with his own Wisdom, and tend to our Happiness if we be governed by them, and to our Destruction if we resist and disobey them.

Ver. 20. *Nay, but, O Man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?*

Ver. 21. *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour?*

Thus by a familiar Example of the Potter's Power over and Proceedings with his Clay, the Apostle maintains God's Right of proceeding with his Creatures: In which he alludes to the Prophet *Jeremiah's* being sent down to the Potter's House, where the Prophet observes a Work upon the Wheel; * *and the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.* Then the word of the Lord came to the prophet, saying, *O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord: behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel.*

* Jer. xviii. 1, --- 6.

Thus it is certain, as the Potter has Power of the same Lump of Clay, to make one Vessel to Honour and another to Dishonour; that for his own Benefit he will endeavour to make it all into Vessels of Honour, being most for his Advantage; and therefore will not designedly make any of it into Vessels to Dishonour: But if in the forming of it, it should break on the Wheel, and thereby frustrate his Purpose, that he cannot make it such a Vessel as he design'd, he must then turn it into such a Vessel as it will make. And thus if ye *Jews*, by wilful Disobedience, frustrate God's Design in making you Vessels to Honour, so that hereupon he unwillingly, as the Potter, turns you into Vessels to Dishonour, How can you then ask, *Why God has made you thus?* The Answer is plain, Because ye would be no better Vessels.

The remaining Part of this Chapter is continued in the same Vindication of God's Proceedings with the *Rebellious* and the *Obedient*, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*; as in

Ver. 22. *What if God willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endureth with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction?*

Ver. 23. *And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?*

Ver. 24. *Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.*

Here

Here is an Allusion to the 17th Verse, concerning God's raising up *Pharaoh* as an Object of his Wrath and Displeasure, thro' his wilful Disobedience; on whom, therefore, he had determined to make his Power known; and therefore, after he was fitted for Destruction, God suffers him still to remain in full Power and kingly Authority, till a fit Opportunity to exert his Wrath upon him, thereby to make him a terrible Example to all the Earth. And hereby ought the *Jews* to take Warning, that they continued not in their Opposition of the glorious Dispensation of the Gospel, lest God should hereby, tho' he still forbears them, make them the like dreadful Examples of his Justice and Judgments. And as his Wrath is shewn on the Disobedient, so is his Mercy shewn on the Obedient, on whom he makes known the Riches of his Glory; as on the *Israelites*, Deliverance from *Egyptian* Bondage; who, notwithstanding, were, many of them, for their future Revolts, made the Monuments of his Wrath and Vengeance; so that, as it follows in the last cited Verse, his Mercies are shewn on the Obedient, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*: *Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.*

Ver. 25. *As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people which were not my people, and her beloved which was not beloved.*

Ver. 26. *And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are*

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not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God.

In these and the following Verses, the Apostle quotes the Prophet's Prediction of the Calling of the *Gentiles*, or of their Acceptation of the Gospel, and many of the *Jews* rejected it: For,

Ver. 27. Esaias also cryeth concerning Israel; Tho' the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.

Now what becomes of the Doctrine of Election and Reprobation, in the Sense of some Men? The *Jews*, who were the only People with whom God had establish'd his Covenants (and might therefore be expected to be the only People of God), and if any had been particularly elected to future Rewards, it must have been them; who might, if any, have expected an irresistible Power to force their Obedience, in order to render them acceptable to himself; yet you see that their Obedience or Disobedience was their own Choice, else they had never deviated so far from God's Will, as out of such vast Numbers, only a Remnant would comply with the Means of God's Mercies in Christ. Upon this Account, therefore, God had determined to bring a swift Destruction upon such as, by a wilful Refusal and Disobedience of his offer'd Mercies, should make themselves the Vessels of his Wrath.

Ver. 28. For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness, because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

A

A Prediction of the succeeding Destruction of *Jerusalem*, which he before warn'd them of by the Example of *Pharaoh*, that he might, if possible, hereby reclaim some, and leave the rest without Excuse.

Ver. 29. *And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of the sabbath had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrha.*

Thus had it not been for a few Righteous, the Wickedness of the Children of *Israel* had equal'd that of the *Sodomites*, and drawn down upon themselves the like Punishments.

Ver. 30. *What shall we say then? that the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attain'd to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith:*

Ver. 31. *But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.*

Here is shewn why the Gentiles were accepted, namely, because they receiv'd the offer'd Mercies of Christ, in believing him to be the true Messias and Saviour of the World, and submitting to his righteous Laws and Precepts, which is stil'd the Righteousness which is of Faith: But the *Jews*, which trusted to the Works of the Law, and sought not this Righteousness which is by Faith, came short of the true Righteousness whereby Salvation is attainable, there being no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved, but that

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of Christ ; and they, having had the Opportunities of hearing his Doctrines, and seeing his Miracles, must be certified of the Divinity of his Mission ; but because he suited not their carnal Interests, they preferred the World and its Interests before his Cross and future Rewards.

Ver. 32. *Wherefore ? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law ; for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone.*

Ver. 33. *As it is written, Behold I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence ; and whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed.*

Now because of the mean Figure our Saviour made in the World, the Jews took Offence at him, and he became to them a Stumbling-stone ; for they imagin'd, as they would have had it, that he should have come amongst them as a potent and powerful Monarch, to have freed them from the Roman Yoke, and to have subdued all Nations unto them : For what the Prophets had foretold concerning his spiritual Kingdom, they (thro' their Carnality) misinterpreted as relating to a temporal one ; and would not therefore look upon the Predictions of his temporal Meanness and Sufferings to belong to him. Thus because he did not gratify their Desires in these Expectations, therefore he became to them a *stumbling-stone and rock of offence* ; yet notwithstanding, *whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed, whether Jew or Gentile.*

And

And now I hope it will appear to all impartial Readers, that there is no such thing as an absolute personal Election or Reprobation, or God's determining our Happiness or Misery in a future State without Respect to our own Actions, which are in our own Choice, and not forc'd nor necessitated; for if they were, as some represent, then were they neither punishable nor rewardable.

Now as this Interpretation is agreeable to the infinite Mercy and Goodness of God, and does not clash with the rest of the Scriptures; so the Maintainers of the contrary Notions have involv'd themselves in strange Inconveniences and Perplexities; and being unable to extricate themselves, have been forced to resolve all at last into the Decrees of God, thus making his Decrees a Sanction to every Action whether right or wrong; to support which Notion they force in the 20th Verse of this Chapter: *Nay, but, O Man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?* But the true Intent and Meaning of these Words having been before explain'd, I need not here repeat it. I would only here observe, that in the Interpretation of such Places of the Scriptures as are dark and difficult to be understood, they should be careful not to contradict those that are plain and obvious; for if those that are plain and easy suffer by
any

any Interpretations of those that are dark and obscure, then we may assure our selves that such Interpretations are false and not to be admitted. The Warning which St. *Peter* gives may very well deserve their Attention : For speaking particularly of his beloved Brother *Paul's* Epistles, he says, *there are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction.*

Let us not therefore presume to charge God with such Decrees, as are no otherwise vindicable than only because it is he that decrees them, as they themselves allow ; Decrees that interfere with and contradict his Attributes, and particularly his Justice : But far be it from God to do any thing that shall have the least Appearance of Injustice : But if the Doctrine of God's fore-ordaining of all *things* to come to pass were to be admitted, I cannot see which way the Maintainers hereof can do less than make him the Author of all the Vice in the World, as well as Virtue : And how unaccountable a Being must such a one be, that first occasions Evil, and then punishes it : Let us not therefore conceive so unworthily of the Almighty, whose Ways are all holy, just, and good ; and doubtless will appear so at last, to all the World : Whereas the contrary Notions are, as I have said, highly derogatory to his Divine Attributes, especially his Goodness and Justice, and indeed, in the Sense of some Men,
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blasphemous. Let us not suffer them to enter into our Thoughts ; let us reject them with that Abhorrence and Detestation they deserve.

I have the longer insisted upon this, because true Virtue and Religion have suffer'd so much from the Propagation of this false Doctrine, of God's absolute Election and Reprobation, without any Regard to Men's Faith or Practice : For hence some have imagin'd themselves the only Elect, both amongst the *Jews* of old, and our modern Sectaries : Hence being puff'd up with spiritual Pride, and looking upon others as rejected by God, they have therefore thought it no Crime to despise them, believing that the Objects of his Scorn ought to be theirs also ; that herein they should best please him by imitating his Example. Hence have proceeded the barbarous and cruel Methods of Persecution exercis'd upon the Bodies of those they have thus concluded to be the Objects of God's Wrath, persuading themselves that hereby they have done God good Service ; for having first, by these Notions, brought themselves to believe that God had made the Souls of some on purpose to damn them, so to please him they would condemn and execute their Bodies. Now others again dreading the Consequences of these Doctrines, and being unable to form right Conceptions of God, and fearing too lest they should be of the Number he had predestinated to Damnation, have hence fallen into a deep Melancholy and Despair, and lived in a mi-

miserable Condition, even in this Life, having (as they apprehended) no Encouragement to act in a religious way, fearing it would be to no purpose, the absolute Decrees of God concerning their future State, being, as some have taught, fixed and unalterable, without any Regard to their Actions. And hence it is that too many have not only attempted, but actually laid violent Hands upon themselves, in order to get rid of the present Terrors and dreadful Apprehensions they have felt within, and with which this rigid Doctrine had possess'd them.

But now the clear Apprehensions of God's Mercy and Justice in his Dealings with his Creatures, are sufficient to prevent all these pernicious Consequences, and to encourage us to make our Addresses to him thro' Christ, in all Cases of our Wants and Exigencies. Let us then guard against such unworthy Notions of God; let us firmly believe that *He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should be brought to repentance.* The very Design of Christ's coming into the World, was to effect our Salvation; the End and Aim of all his Labours, and of his Apostles, was for this Purpose: His Religion is so wisely calculated and adapted to promote the Happiness of Man, which it mainly drives at, and to prevent their Misery, that I would now persuade myself, I shall need only to be very brief in the following Section.

S E C T. VI.

To prove the Christian Oeconomy the only true one.

TH A T Christ was no Impostor, but the true Messias, is very evident from the natural Tendency and Designs of all Impostors, which were always to raise themselves worldly Esteem, and prefer themselves to worldly Grandeur and Honours; whereas, on the contrary, Christ never affected the Esteem of the World, nor its Honours and Advantages; nor did he propagate his Gospel by any worldly Force, but in Opposition to it; and by such Miracles as appeared to be divine, and have a divine Tendency; instilling no Principles into Mankind, but what were naturally calculated to the promoting true Virtue and Happiness: And after a Life of Persecution and Tribulation, he sealed the Truth of his Doctrines by the Death on the Cross, and according to his own Predictions rose again the Third Day, which is impossible any Impostor could do; and is a Truth so fully clear, that Christ really did so, that no Matter of Fact in the World was ever better, if so well, attested: For can any Man imagine that these many Witnesses of it, to whom he had appear'd, could have
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all agreed together to run violently on their own Ruin and Destruction, merely to maintain a Lie? For what could their Expectation in this World be? What but Ignominy, Persecution, and Death? And which they frequently suffer'd accordingly, though never detected of any Falshoods in the Propagation of this Doctrine, notwithstanding all the Attempts that were used by their most implacable Enemies, who certainly had all the Advantages to have discover'd the Cheat, if there had been any; against which they maintain'd this Truth, with the Views only of future Rewards, and valued not what temporal Disadvantages they met with, but courageously proceeded to promote the Interest of Christ's spiritual Kingdom, in spite of all worldly Opposition.

Now can it be reasonably supposed, that any Number of Men in the World would thus unanimously agree in one Design, without any Hopes but those of Futurity, unless they had all the Assurance that could possibly be given of the Truth of what they propagated?

I might here add, that the antient Prophecies, concerning the Messiah to come, were all fully accomplish'd in our Lord *Jesus*, together with their respective Circumstances: But these being largely shewn by several Authors, who have professedly wrote upon that Subject, 'tis needless for me to repeat them.

I might also observe besides that most convincing Evidence of his Resurrection, his visible Ascension, and the wonderful Descent of the *Holy Ghost*, empowering his unlearned Disciples to speak all Sorts of Languages, and to perform divers Miracles, as he himself did ; all which leave no room for *any* Doubt or Scruple of his being the true *Messias*, that should come to save Mankind, and to bring them to *Immortality*.

S E C T. VII.

Religion and Virtue Recommended.

AN D now from the Whole it appears, that we have all the Encouragements we can desire or expect, to be virtuous and religious, since the Practice leads to such glorious Rewards. Let us therefore look upon Vice in its true Deformity, and upon Virtue in its true Loveliness and Beauty, and then make our Choice of that which offers the better Rewards. Vice can offer nothing but the present Gratifications of the sensual Appetites, and leaves behind it nothing but a guilty terrified Conscience, and exposes the Practiser thereof to endless Horror and Destruction: But Virtue offers Peace and Tranquility of Mind in all the Affairs and Occurrences of this Life, with a full and satisfactory Completion of all the Desires
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fires and Expectations of the Soul in a future State to all Eternity. And now the vast Disproportion of these Offers, one would think, would be sufficient to determine every one's Choice : For what has Vice in it to recommend itself? Will the present Gratifications of a sensual Appetite recompense the future Terrors and Torments that will attend it? Will it, O Man, enable thee to bear thy Sufferings in a future State with Ease and Patience? Will not the Remembrance of thy sensual Gratifications be an Addition to thy Torments? Was it not an Aggravation to *Dives's* Miseries, when *Abraham* bad him remember that in the World he enjoy'd his *good things*, when he could not obtain only one Drop of Water to cool his Tongue? In this State there will not be the Gratification of any one sensual Desire, nothing that can be delightful or entertaining: Vice will leave the Soul void of all true Satisfaction and Happiness; but Virtue will give it a Satisfaction that is unbounded: And as the Satisfaction of our Desires is the main End and Aim of all our Pursuits, and we think no Pains too much we can use to attain them; and as nothing short of the Enjoyment of God can yield a *full* Satisfaction to the Desires of the Soul; with what unwearied Diligence then should we pursue the eternal Concerns of it, in this short and uncertain Life, especially when we consider, that in doing so we gratify every rational Desire both of Body and Soul? Then
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let us not trifle with our Happiness any longer ; let us not flatter our selves to our own eternal Undoing ; let us now repent of all our Deviations from Virtue and Religion ; let us for the future make them our Choice ; let us assure our selves we must do this, or we can never obtain Mercy : Let us make no Delay in a Matter of so vast Importance, lest we come to wish we had done it when it will be too late, and we are undone for ever : *To day if thou wilt hear his voice, harden not thy heart* ; assure thy self that the longer thou accustomest thy self to Vice, the harder it will be to repent : Remember that an old habitual Sinner is liken'd in Scripture to the *Ethiopian changing his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots*, so difficult is his Repentance. That some have obtain'd Mercy by Repentance in old Age, I will not go about to deny ; but then probably they have been such as were before ignorant of the Nature of Religion and Virtue, and the Necessity of Repentance : But without all Doubt, an early Piety is the only safe Foundation whereon to build our Hopes of future Happiness ; and for this Reason it is judg'd very necessary to inculcate the Principles of Religion to Children betimes, in their Days of Innocency, and to guard them against Vice and Profaneness ; to instil into their Minds the true Notions of God's Mercy and Goodness, with his Love to the Virtuous, and the Rewards he has laid up for them, and his Hatred of Vice, and the Punishments that attend it ;

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to encourage them in every virtuous Action with Praise, and every vitious one to discountenance.

Whoever therefore has trifled away his former Time, let him speedily return to a better Mind, and redouble his Diligence in the Way of Religion and Virtue: And tho' he may at first meet with a Reluctancy upon the Entrance of a religious Course, let him remember, that the longer he neglects it, the greater will the Reluctancy be. Wherefore now strive to overcome it, by leaving off thy vitious Habits, always remembering that it will never be so easily done as *now*; and if once thou overcomest the Reluctancy of this Entrance into a religious Life, thou wilt thenceforth confess, that the *ways of Christ are pleasantness*, and that *all his paths are peace*: For if we live agreeably to his Commands, we may then assure our selves of his Favour, and that he will at last present us before his Heavenly Father (as the Purchase of his Blood), and receive us into the heavenly *Jerusalem*, there to celebrate the Praises of our Blessed Creator and Redeemer, there to enjoy that *Rest* which remains for the *People of God*.

POSTSCRIPT.

POSTSCRIPT.



THE Doctrine of our Blessed Saviour's Divinity being, now-a-days, so much controverted, and by many absolutely denied, I have thought it not improper to add something to illustrate my former Assertion in my PREFACE, viz. That our blessed Saviour is Co-essential, Co-eternal, and Co-equal with the Father; and particularly, in that he was the Creator of all Things, and *without him was not any thing made that was made.* From which I observe, that he was no Creature himself, because *without him was not any thing made that was made*; therefore he was not made himself, except he could make himself, which was impossible: therefore he must be a necessary Being; and if necessary, he must be eternal; and if necessary and eternal, he must be independent; and therefore co-essential, co-eternal, and co-equal with the Father: And as the Holy Ghost is said to be one with them, it

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cannot remain doubtful from Revelation, that these Three constitute the Unity of the Divine Nature and Perfections, which is a Mystery above our most exalted Comprehensions, as being above our scanty and narrow Capacities in this State, as are many Secrets of his wonderful Works themselves; therefore no Wonder that the Author of these Works himself, in his most exalted Nature, should remain mysterious to us, as to his Being and Existence: But what he has thought proper to reveal of himself, we ought to give our Assent and Belief to, as being a Matter to exercise our Faith upon: For if we believe nothing but what we can bring within the Compass of our own Capacities, and make demonstrable, there is no room for the Exercise of Faith; for what is self-evident, remains no longer the Object of Faith.

But those, whose Notions have led them to a Disregard of the sacred Writings, and will believe nothing but what may be demonstrated from the Nature and Reason of Things, do hereby prevent themselves from being wrought upon by any Arguments drawn from the Scriptures; and even those who will allow Divine Revelation amongst some of the Opponents of the Doctrine of our Blessed Saviour's Divinity, if they be pinch'd with a Fear of Conviction therefrom, will call these Texts spurious, which do evince what they do not chuse to believe: Thus the Denial of the Trinity leads
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some Men to a Denial of the Authority of the sacred Writings.

But if the Authority of the Texts above cited may be called in Question (tho' I am verily persuaded myself of the Truth of 'em) yet that Christ was God as well as Man, will appear from other plain Texts, the Authority of which is equally granted by all who do allow of a Revelation: for whatever may be alledged of his attributing his Works to the Power of his Father, will appear to be only on the account of his Manhood, to preserve that necessary Distinction between the Divine Being and Human Nature. Thus when he said, *My Father is greater than I*, this is to be understood, that the Human Nature he was cloathed with, was inferior to the Divine Being; for being cloathed with Human Nature, he had taken upon him the *form of a servant*; yet, with respect to his Divine Nature, *he thought it no robbery to be equal with God*.

Did he not, as God, forgive Sins, which the *Jews* judged blasphemous for a Man to offer? Did he not accept divine Adorations when paid him, which no good created Being ever would? For when St. *John* would have worshipped the Angel, he charg'd him he should not do it, with this Reason, *I am thy fellow-servant* *. And tho' Christ took upon him the Form of a Servant as to his human Nature, and

* Rev. xxii. 9.

hereupon sometimes expreffes himself as a Man, yet we find again that at other times he expreffes himself according to his Divine Nature, which proves him to be both God and Man, even one Christ.

Thus when he was called *Good Master*, he answer'd, *Why callest thou me Good, there is none Good but one, that is, God?* Now our Blessed Saviour was strictly *Good*, as being without Sin, *neither was guile found in him*: Therefore he was G O D, as well as M A N.

Now the Consequences of believing Christ to be no more than a Creature seem to be very dangerous; for as it leads to the Denial of any Satisfaction made by his Death and Sufferings for the Offences of his Creatures, so I fear that as a created Being was incapable to make any, that he will be to those who believe him to be no other than a created Being, no more than they believe him to be; and as no Created Being could do any more than perform its own Duty to its Creator, and was therefore incapable to make Satisfaction (upon any Terms) for the Offences of any other Beings, so those who will believe him to be no more than a created Being, may not expect any Satisfaction made by him for their Offences. And forasmuch as he requires in very many repeated Injunctions, that our Belief of him should be proportionable to the Worth of his Divine Person, so the contrary Persuasion must be very dangerous to those who have the Benefit of his

his Divine Revelation: For if Repentance and good Works perform'd by us could have atoned for our many actual Transgressions, without that Satisfaction made by Christ in the Flesh, who can imagine that he would have undergone such Indignities and Death on the Cross, to purchase that for us that we might have enjoy'd without them?

Does not this Opinion somewhat represent the Case of the *Jews*, who went about to establish a Righteousness of their own, which was not of *Faith*, but as it were by the Works of the Law? For hereby the Authority of the sacred Writings is undermin'd, with the very Foundation of the Christian Revelation, and the Benefits of Christ's Obedience, Death, and Sufferings: So that by substituting Natural instead of reveal'd Religion, all Religion is brought into Anarchy and Confusion; and so far as this prevails, must overthrow the very Design of Christ's Appearance in the Flesh, and be the Forerunner of that universal Degeneracy Christ seem'd to be appris'd would prevail at his Second Coming, which he introduces by way of Interrogation: *When I come shall I find faith on the earth?*

Now the Case of the *Jews* in our Saviour's Time appears to me to be very much the same with the Degeneracy of those who now-a-days reject the Authority of Revelation, and endeavour to establish Natural Religion in the room of it; for these seek Salvation in the Ways of their

own chusing or prescribing, as the *Jews* did. The Similitude St. *Paul* us'd to them in the 9th Chapter to the *Romans*, Ver, 16. (before explained) with reference to temporal Concerns, may very well bear a spiritual Inference, viz. that as it was not of *Abraham* or *Isaac*, that willed, or of *Esau* that ran to get the temporal Blessing, because contrary to God's Purpose in the Appearance of the *Messiah*; so those who will and run to obtain Mercy in the Ways of their own chusing or prescribing, may expect to fail of it, because contrary to the Ways which God has promised to shew his Mercies to: For tho' we must both will and run to obtain Mercy, it must be in the Ways God has chosen, and promised to accept of, viz. by Faith in his Son, our Blessed Saviour, and by an Obedience to his Precepts. This is therefore the Way that leads to Life eternal; and whoever think to obtain it otherwise, let them dread the Consequences of so vain an Attempt, (I speak to those who do, or may, enjoy the Advantages of Revelation) for there is (as I have observ'd) *no other name given under heaven by which men can be saved.*

Let not any therefore depend upon any future Offers of Mercy after this Life, either in a State of *Separation from the Body*, or after the Resurrection thereof; for this is the only State of *Probation or Tryal*; and as *Death* leaves us, *Judgment* will find us: And can any expect, that if the Offers of Mercy (which are so extensive)

tenfive) be now rejected, *they* could ever after be received, provided *they were*, or *could be offered again*? the very Nature of refusing it now being firmly established: And the Conflicts the Wicked undergo here to make themselves the Objects of Divine Vengeance, I doubt not are as great and as many as those which are undergone by them who make choice of an habitual Course of Virtue in opposition to their carnal Inclinations; for Vice and Wickedness, before Men can be entire Masters of them, are, at first Onset upon them, committed with Fear and Reluctancy; there still remaining in human Nature, so much of the Divine Impression, as will direct Men's Actions to a Consciousness of Good or Evil, and a Satisfaction or Dissatisfaction within themselves of standing excus'd or accus'd within their own Consciences; and if this may be had without Revelation, how much more must the Assistance thereof add to this Illumination? Therefore those who enjoy the Advantages of God's reveal'd Will, and chuse to ridicule it, and to establish a Righteousness of their own *prescribing*, may expect to be rejected, as *Abraham, Isaac, and Esau*, in their Endeavours to obtain a *temporal Blessing* contrary to God's Appointment.

As the Terms upon which God has promised to bestow his Mercies, have been before consider'd, and must, from the former Propositions, appear to be offer'd only in this Life; therefore those who do not accept them here, we have

no Reason to suppose would accept them hereafter; for the rejecting them now (which cannot be done but by doing Violence to Conscience) will render the Rejectors of it incapable to receive any further Offers thereof, having in their last Choice and Determination, been guilty of total Apostacy; and therefore, with the fall'n Angels, made it impossible to change and repent, if Repentance cou'd again be offer'd them; their habituated Courses to Vice and Wickedness being then so firmly established, that rather than to chuse a Recantation, they will then, as the fall'n Angels, increase their Malice and Wickedness, in doing Despite to the Spirit of Grace, that strove to reclaim them in time; and so continue that Fewel that their beloved Vices had kindled, to be a *Fire* that will *never be quenched*.

Let us therefore, *while it is called to day*, accept those Terms of Mercy which are offer'd to us in the Scriptures, that by Faith in Christ, and Obedience to his Precepts, we may not make void the End of his Appearance and Suffering for us: Let us hold fast that *Faith once delivered to the Saints*, and accordingly bring forth the Fruits of Repentance and Good Works in this Life, that at Christ's *Second Coming* we may be found acceptable to him.

F I N I S.

A Second VOLUME of
Philosophical Meditations,
 WITH
 Divine Inferences :

Containing a VIEW of

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| 1. The Primitive Purity of the Creation.
2. The Change that ensued upon Man's Disobedience.
3. The further Changes that succeeded the Deluge, and <i>Lamech's</i> Prophecy concerning his Son <i>Noah</i> consider'd; with a new Definition of the present Phænomena of our Atmosphere in the Nature of Lightning in a clear Sky, Fire-Balls, | Fire - Drakes, Shooting-Stars, and Lights in the North, with Tempests of Thunder and Lightning.
4. The last and final Change to be expected, after which all Subjection to future Change will be wholly remov'd.
5. The State of the Blessed in a New Heaven, and a New Earth. |
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The whole being interspersed with Divine Inferences and many useful Curiosities never before taken notice of by any other Author.

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Containing a View of

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3. The further Change that took place in the second Part of the Creation.	4. The last and final Change that took place in the third Part of the Creation.
5. The State of the Blessed in a new Heaven, and in a new Earth.	6. The State of the Wicked in a new Heaven, and in a new Earth.

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To the Reverend Doctors and
Masters of Colleges of the
Famous University of Ox-
ford.

Reverend Sirs,



OUR Candour and Generosity
in Conversation with, and
Subscriptions to the Works of,
so mean an Author as my self,
make it appear very conspicu-
ous that you look upon Truth
and Reason by whomsoever offer'd.

AND as it is the very End and Design
of your Educating of Youth, to advance the
Spiritual Welfare of Mankind, in Support-
ing the Truths of the Gospel-Revelation;
so I am very sensible and well assur'd, that
as this is your professed, most valuable,
commendable and laudable Employment,
that all Attempts of the like Tendency,

which carry along with them Truth and Integrity, tho' from such, who have wanted the Improvements of a liberal Education, and a proper Cultivation of their natural Parts, will not meet with the less Esteem amongst you ; since you can judge of Truth and Reason without measuring the Worth of an Author's Works by his Riches and Learning.

I therefore submit this with my other Works to your Judgment and Approbation, and only desire your Patronage so far as you shall find them worthy thereof, being,

Reverend Sirs,

Your most Submissively Obedient,

and Devoted

Humble Servant,

Benjamin Parker.



THE PREFACE.



Y last Volume of Philosophical Meditations having met with a general Acceptance in the World, and I hope in some measure answer'd my Design and Desire in promoting Religion and Virtue; I am hereby encouraged to present the World with some further useful Curiosities both entertaining and profitable, being Meditations deriv'd from a sedate Contemplation and Improvement of such useful Works, as I have formerly had the happiness of reading and perusing.

I have carefully avoided forming any Philosophical Hypotheses that will not bear a Scriptural Sense, or interpreting any obscure Places in the Scriptures to clash or interfere with those that are plain and easy to be understood; being well assur'd that that Divine Spirit which directed their Composures cannot be inconsistent with itself, whatever the Interpreters of them have been; who some of them, thro' Partiality, or Views of private

private Interest, or Affectation to false Opinions, or out of Compliment to their own or others Errors, may have misrepresented them; all which I have avoided with the utmost Sincerity and Impartiality, and have endeavoured to treat upon each Subject in such manner as, I judge, will also agree to right Reason.

And here it may not be amiss to add something to the Contents of the following Discourses.

Our first Parents by attempting a Resemblance of God in Knowledge, by an Act of Disobedience, found afterwards, to their Shame and Sorrow, that they had lost the Resemblance of him in Righteousness and true Holiness, and became debas'd by attempting to exalt themselves; for by the Knowledge they gain'd of Evil, so much they lost of their first Purity and Innocence, and became in part ignorant of the true and divine Knowledge in which their Happiness chiefly consisted; and could not be recover'd but by that divine Light, that promised Seed of the Woman, that should conduct our Feet again into the Way of Peace: For as it was not of Malice that our first Parents transgressed against God, but by a Stratagem of the Devil, therefore God in Mercy promises to Mankind a Redeemer to ransom them from the Jaws of their Deceiver, since there was a Possibility of their Recovery; which had there not been, I doubt not but the Punishment of Death would have been immediately inflicted upon them, and thereby a Stop put to any future Posterity to be deriv'd from them; as is plain, I think, from
God's

God's manner of proceeding with their future Race, when there appeared no Footsteps left of Hopes of Recovery from incorrigible Wickedness, I mean his Overthrow of the Old World by Water, and Sodom and Gomorrah by Fire, and his Command of the utter Destruction of the Canaanites, because they had fill'd up the Measure of their Iniquities; with his Deliverance of the rebellious Israelites into Captivity; and the most remarkable Destruction of the Temple and City of Jerusalem, the History of which is not to be parallel'd, because of their inveterate Opposition to the glorious Dispensation of the Gospel, by the promised Seed of the Woman to bruise the Serpent's Head; who from the Time of that Promise became a Light again to the World, to guide all Men, who were not wanting to themselves, into the Way of Peace; so that they who enjoy'd not the Revelation of that Light, for want of true Tradition, and had only a small, imperfect, and uncertain Notion of it, yet the Declaration of Future Rewards and Punishments was a Voice that reach'd the Ends of the Earth, and Christ was a Light within, and a Monitor to all that came into the World, to give them at least a Consciousness of their Actions, which would accuse or excuse them, according to which they should stand or fall in Judgment. And as God will expect no more from any than according to what he entrusteth them with, so those who have God's Will declar'd to them in the Scriptures have a vast Addition to this inward Light, and must

must therefore be accountable accordingly. And yet we see many amongst us, who will choose the Works of Darkness in the midst of this Light, which must needs be a great Hindrance to the entertaining and spreading of it where it is wanted; when even so much Ignorance prevails amongst us, that many would disown in themselves a Freedom of Will, that they might thereby charge all their Actions upon Fatal Necessity, after so many Assurances that God has set before us Good and Evil, and offered them to our Choice, with Promises annex'd to the one, and Threatnings pronounc'd against the other. And if our Actions were not at our own Choice, why are we call'd upon and invited to be virtuous, when all Calls and Entreaties in such a Case would be but vain Mockeries and Insults over those who could not comply with such Offers of Mercy? But how such stupid Ignorance can prevail amongst us (which I think the very Heathens would be asham'd to profess) I am at a Loss to imagine.

I doubt not but even those, who would maintain the Fatality of Actions, if some considerable Reward should be offer'd them upon the Performance of such or such an Action, would find in themselves a free Will to perform it, (if it was not an Impossibility,) tho' some Difficulty should attend the doing of it. If they should answer that the Prospect of the Reward was a Byass to the Necessity of the Action; then I would ask why the Promises of the Gospel do not lay the same,

same, nay a greater Constraint upon our Actions, whereby to obtain the Promises thereof? If you answer that these Rewards you have not so much the present Experience of; then it is plain that your own Wills are concern'd in the Choice of your Actions; for you can command them in what you judge will bring you in a present Benefit; and shall not the Obligations we are under for the Concerns of Eternity lay a greater Constraint upon them than the Prospect of transitory Enjoyments? I am sure if worldly Views can constrain our Actions, much more ought spiritual; and I doubt not but they will, where there is not exercis'd a strong Resistance to the Spirit of God acting upon the inward Disposition of the Soul.

There are others who call themselves Christians, and count themselves, (by some inward Marks) of the Number of God's Elect, and attend the Worship and Service of God; yet out of a seeming Humility (tho' the Bottom is Self-Arrogance) will disclaim a Freedom of their own Actions, that they may ascribe all the Glory to God, as they pretend, when indeed they are the very Persons that rob him of it, tho' hereby they seem to disclaim all Worthiness in themselves, being carried on in their good Actions, as they humbly confess, by an Impulse of Necessity.*

I allow that we ought and are bound to give God the Glory of our good Actions, not because constrain'd, but that he has put it in our Power to act well, thro' the Grace he is willing, thro' Christ,

* And therefore a Slip or Miscarriage is but a necessary Failing attending them, permitted with a Design to shew them their own Weakness, and to keep them humble.

to bestow on all, who do not wilfully reject it ; for if it was only confin'd to a few, then could it not be free Grace, but partial, which contradicts his Attributes and Declarations of his Impartiality.

I further allow, that when we have done all we can, we must acknowledge our selves unprofitable Servants ; for our Services only can profit our selves, and therefore must be Acts of our own ; for doing all we can, cannot imply doing all we are forc'd, but must signify an Act in our own Power, and in which it was our Choice or Freedom to be more or less industrious ; so that no Constraint is laid upon our Actions. How unchristian then is it for any to believe that they only, with a few of their Fraternity, are distinguish'd with the Favour of God, and the rest of the World rejected, despis'd, contemn'd, and reprobated thro' a fatal Necessity of sinning ; as if the Happiness of Heaven would consist in beholding the Cruelties exercis'd upon the unfortunate Fatality of Wretches destin'd to unavoidable Misery.

This is certainly so far from being the Voice of the Gospel, that it is the Device of the Devil, and they who maintain it may dread being in his Snare ; and tho' he tempted our first Parents with the Prospect of Knowledge, he is hereby attempting to lull these asleep in Ignorance, Ignorance indeed of the deepest kind ! which so blinds the Eyes, as to make Men insensible of the Freedom of their own Actions ! and what I should not have imagin'd could have prevail'd in the World, had I not been too much an Ear-Witness of this Doctrine's Propagation ! And

And as I have engaged my Pen in the Defence of Truth, and desire to promote the Spiritual Good of Mankind, I have one thing to observe as too common an Error amongst the Vulgar, viz. That Religion consists in the outward Worship of publick and private Prayers, and that if they be but conscientiously perform'd the Business of Religion is over, and they may at other Seasons give a loose to their Actions, and by returning to their set Times of Prayers the Atonement is made; as if God and Mammon had an equal Right to their Services.

We are indeed under an indispensable Obligation to be conscientious in the Duty of Publick and Private Prayers; but to what End? That is not the Substance of our Duty; no, it is but the Shell of it, and without the Shell the Kernel cannot be long preserv'd: It is the Food of the Soul, by which if it receives no Nourishment, it is a sign it was not prepar'd by Hunger and Thirst after it; and if so all the pompous Shew of outward Religion is but as an empty Nut, whose Shell is fair and promising, but being crack'd there is found no Kernel: The Sum therefore of Religion consists both in Acts of Divine Worship and agreeable Practices, which must be inseparable; for as the one ought to be done, so the other ought not to be left undone, good Actions being preparatory to acceptable Performances in Ordinances of Worship; and Prayers and Ordinances rightly perform'd are also great Helps to virtuous Actions; for as the Kernel of a Nut will not keep without the Shell, so the Shell without the Kernel is only fit for Fuel.

I am very sensible the Comment I have given of the xxi. of the Revelations comes vastly short of taking in the Extensiveness of those mysterious Allegories contained in the divine Description of the new Heaven and new Earth; but as I have taken care to fix my Explications thereof upon the Authority of their Agreeableness to the rest of the Scriptures, so far as I have attempted them, I can rest satisfied that while I build on that Foundation my Structure is safe: And therefore, I think my Interpretation will be allow'd by the unprejudiced; not only from its Agreeableness to the Reason of Things, but because of its exactly corresponding with the concurrent Account of the rest of the divine Composures of the Sacred Writings; for as it is plain from them that our Bodies will undergo a certain and manifest Change from Corruption to Incorruption, from Subjection to Mortality to Immortality; so is it likewise plain and reasonable to believe that a like Change (with a different Regard to the Species of Things) will pass upon the whole Creation belonging to us; and that even the Air, Earth, and Waters will be chang'd or transmuted into one perfect, pure, refin'd, and transparent solid Substance; and fitted for the Reception of its refin'd Inhabitants, together with whom they will never more become liable or subject to any further Alterations, but remain permanent and durable to all Eternity: For I think I have made it plain from the Accounts of both St. Peter and St. Paul, that the Heavens and Earth will not be wholly consum'd by the general Conflagration, but chang'd and made new, by a Removal of all Causes of Imperfection. But the
Time

Time when this will happen is wholly a Secret, and therefore I have not medled with it.

That the Dead in Christ shall rise first, and the Righteous then living will be changed and caught up to meet the Lord in the Air, we are inform'd from St. Paul, 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. and that they will ever be with the Lord: Which Account may give us a Light into St. John's xx. of Revelations; from which I ſhall obſerve that it appears to me that the Righteous then living, with thoſe that have part in the firſt Reſurrection, as St. John calls it, will be receiv'd to a State of perfect Happineſs, to reign with Chriſt in the Glory he enter'd into upon his Aſcenſion into Heaven; by which Heaven I underſtand a Place of the immediate Preſence of God's Glory manifeſted, which where-ever that is, is the only Happineſs of thoſe who are by Purity capable to bear it. But I cannot imagine that reigning with Chriſt a Thouſand Years (or in the Interim of the firſt and laſt and general Reſurrection) can at all ſignify a Temporal Reign with Chriſt upon Earth as it now is: No; his Kingdom is far from being thus temporal; and 'tis not to be imagin'd, as many have concluded, that this would be a Thouſand Years Reign upon Earth. This Millennium I am fully perſuaded will be of a ſpiritual Kind, far ſuperior to all Imaginations of worldly Splendor; and the City or Habitation of the Righteous in this Reign will be the Poſſeſſion of his bliſſful Preſence and Glories in which he is now inveſted; and which we may reaſonably believe he will not leave to make his Followers worldly Monarchs; for this ſeems alto-

gether incongruous to the whole Scope and Design of the Gospel ; and too much to favour of the Error of the Jews in their Expectation of the Messiah's first Appearance in the Flesh : But let no Christians be ready to swallow themselves, what has been so justly condemn'd in them. For tho' it is a Condescension in the Almighty frequently to represent spiritual Pleasures or Miseries by Allegories agreeable to our sensitive Faculties, because in our spiritual Infancy (and even throughout this State,) we cannot discern the Things of the Spirit so well as those of the Flesh, yet we are not to rest in the Representations of the Substance of Things, as if the Shadow was the Substance itself.

I observe further, that during this Millennium, or thousand Years Reign of the Righteous with Christ, Satan is said to be bound with a Chain and cast into the bottomless Pit : From which I humbly apprehend that that great Transaction of the Resurrection of the Righteous, and Change of the then living, and their Ascension, will put a stand and a sudden Surprise to the whole remaining Inhabitants of the Earth, that they shall be convinced and undeceived of their former Errors ; which they will then renounce and disclaim, so that both Jews, Mahometans, and all heretical and antichristian Powers, which may all be stil'd the Whore of Babylon, will be destroy'd, and all those who practis'd Merchandise with her will stand amazed at, and lament their former Follies, and embrace the true Light ; so that hereby the Jews are call'd in, and the Fulness of the Gentiles gathered ; which cannot be expected without

without some miraculous Transaction to accomplish it ; and which when accomplished, as it will advance the glorious Light of the Gospel of Christ, so it will as universally destroy the Works and Deceits of the Devil ; for by the Lustre and Glory of Christ's Kingdom, even in his Church Militant, where his Gospel prevails in Purity, so far is Satan's Kingdom weakned, and his Presence banished, and therefore, upon an universal Acceptation of the Purity of the Gospel, freed from Superstitions and antichristian Heresies : Satan will naturally be banished, as being impossible for him to approach where the Truth and Righteousness of the Son of God prevails, who came to destroy the Works of the Devil : For this is the Chain that binds and keeps him off from these Regions, and casts him into the bottomless Pit.

But then it is said or foretold, he will be loosed again a little Season : From which, I think, we may conjecture, that after the Church had thus flourished for a considerable Time, set forth by a Thousand Years (which how long that may here signify, whether according to our present Computation of Years, I cannot determine) there will again be a Degeneracy, whereby Satan will again be loosed amongst the Inhabitants of the Earth, by their giving themselves over to Wickedness ; Righteousness being the only Lock or Chain that imprisons him from us ; and Wickedness the Key that lets him loose upon us ; upon which prevailing Degeneracy we are told in the 8th and 9th Verses of this 20th of Revelations.

That he shall go out to deceive the Nations, which are in the four Quarters of the Earth,

Gog and Magog, to gather them together to Battle ; the Number of whom is as the Sand of the Sea : And they went up on the Breadth of the Earth, and compassed the Camp of the Saints about, and the beloved City ; and Fire came down from God out of Heaven, and devoured them.

Thus where once there is a Way made for Satan's Entertainment, his Deceits are greedily swallowed ; and now they are universally received throughout the four Quarters of the Earth, Gog and Magog to gather them together to Battle ; that is, I conceive, most wicked and imperious Insults against God and Goodness, headed by Satan, now let loose amongst them by their universal Degeneracy, so that their Numbers are liken'd to the Sand of the Sea ; and their going upon the Breadth of the Earth, shews that the Inhabitants of the whole Earth were now become apostatiz'd from Goodness, whereby the Camp of the Saints, and beloved City, which I here take to signify Righteousness, Truth, &c. which they encompass'd, was universally fought against ; so that their Rebellions can now no longer be born, upon which God sends Fire from Heaven to devour them, and by a general Conflagration puts a final Period to the present State of Things ; my Accounts of which I refer you to in my following Work, which I have endeavour'd to make useful to the World, and shall, as Opportunity permits and Abilities enable me, endeavour to be serviceable, being desirous to promote true Virtue and Godliness.

B. P.

Philosophical

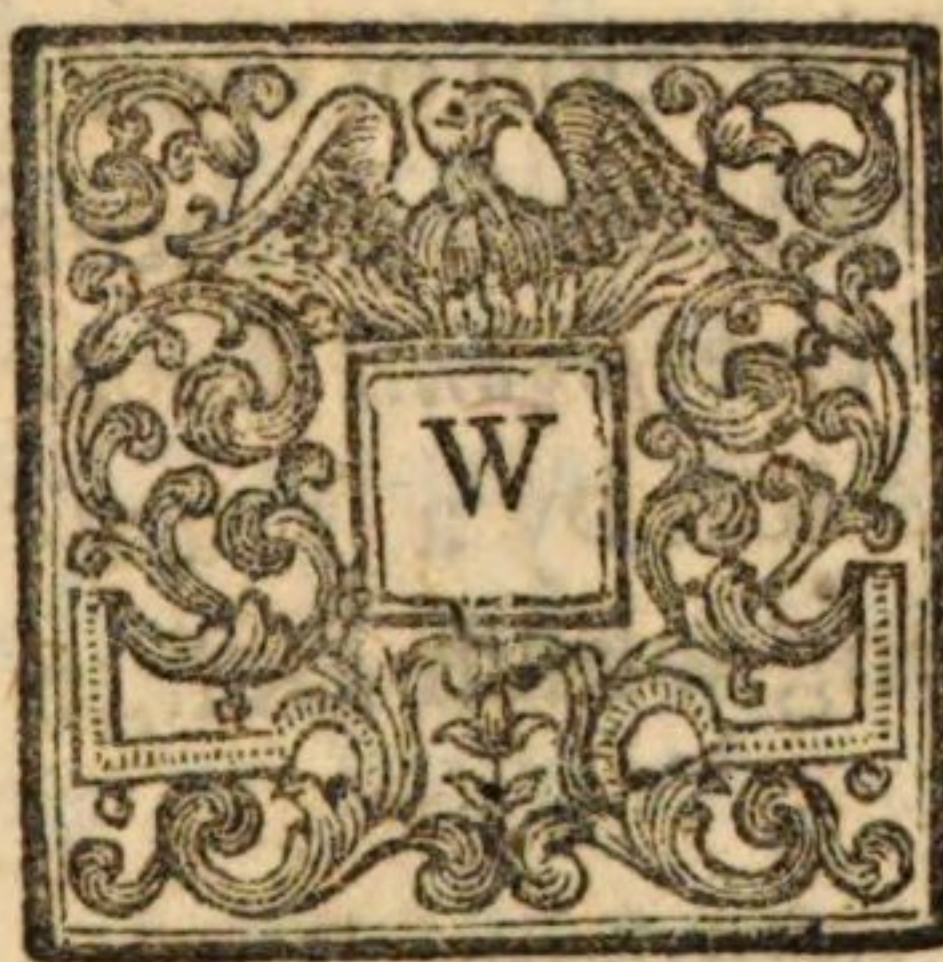


Philosophical Meditations,

W I T H

Divine Inferences.

V O L. II.



WHEN God had *created the Heavens and the Earth*, and beheld *all his Works*, he pronounced them *very good*, that is, in a State of Purity; the Continuation in which then depended upon the keeping or violating a *Law* given unto the Governor or Head of the Creation, **M A N**; who (as I have shewed in my former Discourse) being endued with *Reason* and *Freedom of Will*, was capable to have kept the *Law* given him; which if he had, all things upon *this* Globe had remained in their Primitive Purity; which since have been subjected to *Vanity*, and have undergone several Changes and Alterations, thro' *Man's* Deviation

viation from his Original Creation; for Man's Disobedience has unhinged the Order and Harmony of the whole *Creation*, that he was made the *Governor* of, whereby all things in this present State have been reduced to continual Decay and Changeableness, and will continue with Variety of Alterations and Instability until the last and final Change to be expected; when all Subjection to Change and Alteration shall be wholly removed, by a Removal of all the Causes of Imperfection, and a *Restitution* of all things by *Christ*.

From a View therefore of the Purity of the first Estate of the *Creation*, and the several Disorders that have ensued on *Man's* Disobedience, I shall endeavour to set forth the great Obligations we are under to an Obedience to the Second Covenant God has, thro' his *Son*, made with fall'n Man, from the Consideration of God's great Love and Mercy in offering much greater Happiness to an Obedience to the *second Covenant*, than that was which was lost by a Transgression of the *first*. In pursuing which Design I shall,

First, Take a View of the primitive Purity of the Creation.

Secondly, Of the Change that ensued upon Man's Disobedience.

Thirdly, Of the further Changes that succeeded the Deluge, with *Lamech's* Prophecy concerning his Son *Noah* consider'd, *Gen. v. 29*. *This same shall comfort us, concerning our Work and Toil of our Hands, because of the Ground which the Lord hath cursed.*

Fourthly,

Fourthly, I shall enquire into the last and final Change to be expected by the General *Conflagration*, after which all Subjection to Change and Alteration will be wholly removed.

And *lastly*, I shall consider the State of the Blessed in a *New Heaven* and *New Earth*, described by St. *John* in the 21st Chapter of his *Revelations*.

S E C T. I.

Of the primitive State of the Creation.

FIRST then I am to take a View of the primitive Purity of the *Creation* of this Globe ; which we find in its Original State was free from any Annoyances or Offensiveness either in its Surface or Atmosphere, all destructive Particles and Effluvia being lodged in the Bowels of the Earth, and confined from their Noxiousness in the Earth's Formation: For when it was produced out of its Original Chaos, or State of confused Fluidity, *the Spirit of God moving upon the Face of the Waters*, or the extreme Parts of this Chaos, in its rude and undigested Form, takes proper Care to secure all offensive and noxious Particles in such proper Confinement, as should either so continue never to become destructive, without an Occasion given by the Actions of his reasonable Creature *Man* ; or else were so situated that upon any sufficient Cause of *Man's* Deviation from his original Purity, they might be employed to fulfil
and

and execute the consequential Designs of *Divine Justice* ; for upon the Departure of Man from his original State, the whole Creation of this Globe should lose all its Purity of Earth, Air, and Waters, and all things should become liable to Change and subject to Alteration ; so that all Stability would by Man's Obedience or Disobedience be continued or lost.

For as the *Spirit of God did move upon the Face of the Waters*, in the Formation of this *Globe*, there can remain no doubt but that its Production must be *pure*, yet capable to answer all the Ends of infinite Wisdom, whether for Rewards to Obedience or Punishments to Disobedience.

And now let us take a transient View of the short Enjoyment of our first Parents primitive Happiness : In which Estate I shall shew the Probability of Mr. *Whiston's Hypothesis* of Days and Years being synonymous, or that before their Fall the Earth had only an *Annual Motion*, without a *Diurnal Rotation* ; which being sufficiently proved by him, to be no ways contrary to Scripture but agreeable to it, in his *Theory of the Earth*, it only remains that I prove it *commodious* to that State and *agreeable* to Reason ; for as, in my former Discourse, I avoided descanting upon such Things as I found observed by others, where I saw little room for Improvements, I shall also observe the same Method in this.

I know there are many that upon a View of the present Affairs may judge it very improper and discommodious for the Sun to remain one
half

half Year above, and the other beneath our Horizon, throughout the whole Globe, as being an unavoidable Consequence of this *Hypothesis*, because so much Day at one time and Night at another would be inconsistent with our natural Inclinations to rest, and likewise Night itself would be a Weariness, which was set apart for Refreshment.

And 2dly, It may likewise be objected that the Length of the Sun's Presence and Absence might cause prodigious *Heats* and *Colds*, which are both found offensive, impairing and decaying to Nature.

This, I confess, upon the present Situation of Affairs, may appear difficult for our Judgments to form an adequate Idea of; but as we are not to judge of future Things by present ones, so neither is it reasonable to judge of a *past pure Estate* by a present corrupt one.

In answer to the 1st Objection, That the Presence of the Sun for half a Year, and its Absence as long might much better suit the Occasions of that pure and happy Estate, in which this Globe and its Inhabitants were created, may appear probable from the following Considerations.

For those Days might much better suit their strong and undecaying Natures in that State, in which while they continued, they had nothing to do, that would be any Toil or Weariness to them, their Employments being their Delights; their Days were spent in all the innocent Gratifications of Sense; they had only one thing
commanded

commanded that they should restrain their Inclinations from, and deny themselves of; all other Pleasures of Sense were not only allowed and permitted, but made the Motives of their daily Happiness, to enjoy the good things that God had adorned and furnished the Earth with in great *Variety, Plenty, and Beauty*. With what Delights could they view the flowery Fields, and receive the odoriferous Scents therefrom? With what satisfactory Delights could they gratify their Appetites in the most delectable as well as pure Fruits that uncorrupted Nature was capable to afford? Thus their Days might be spent without Weariness in the most refined and palatable Pleasures, and in the fulfilling all the rational Desires of the Bodily Sensations; for in the Day-time, Nature having produc'd all things that were pleasant and profitable without Tillage, they had nothing assigned them to do, but to dress the Garden, which, howsoever they were appointed to dress it, was no Toil but a Pleasure, not to be equall'd by the Joy of the laborious Farmer, when, after much Pains and Toil, he sees a plentiful Return to his Expectation of increase; for their chief Employment was to gather the Fruits necessary for their Sustenance, and to enjoy them with palatable Delights, and thankfully to receive Nature's Products, from the bountiful Hands of their *benevolent Creator*.

Thus when by Day they had gratified all Bodily Sensations in the Enjoyments of the good Things of the Earth's natural Bounty, there
not

not appearing any Probability of Weariness in half a Year of Day being thus spent by those who were created with strong and undecaying Natures ; how they should then spend so long a Night remains now to be considered. And I think it will not be very difficult to imagine which way these tedious Nights (as some may think them, because half a Year long) might be spent with the greatest Satisfaction, and likewise with the utmost Delight and Pleasure, and such as is scarcely to be imagin'd ; for the Day being spent in Bodily Pleasures, the Night returns to refresh and brighten the *Soul*, which, not being clouded with any Infirmities or Obscurities, admits of the Heavenly Society of *God and Angels*, who always make their Abode with *pure and perfect Hearts*, and the greater the *Purity*, the more of their *immediate Presence* attends them ; then how great a Share thereof must be enjoy'd by our first Parents in their sinless State, when there was no Footsteps of Impurity in them to debar or keep back the *blissful Presence of God*, and the *Society of holy Angels* ? So that awake or asleep there was nothing in them to create any troublesome Ideas, nor tiresome Expectations of the Day's Return ; these Pleasures and Delights being more than sufficient to compensate the Absence of the Sun during this Season, since the Loss of temporal Light is supply'd by spiritual ; for as the one can be only serviceable to temporal Ends, so the other, that answers spiritual, must be of a sublimer and superior Nature : Thus therefore as they were made up of both Soul and Body,

here

here is the Delight of both answer'd; and no doubt likewise but the *Moon*, which was made to rule the Night, was serviceable to them in their pure Estate, by whose Revolutions they would enjoy the Benefit of her Presence (upon the aforesaid Hypothesis) * one half of the Time between Change and Change, viz. six times in one of these Nights; so that its Presence above the Horizon and Absence below, would be equal, as being something more than one of our fortnight's each, which might not only afford them those Intervals of Moon-light, but by the Position of every Full-moon would be unto them a token of the Times and Seasons of the Night, and an Assurance to them of the *Sun's* Return also after so many of the *Moon's* Revolutions.

But then, *Object. II.* By the long Presence of the Sun prodigious Heats are occasioned, and Colds by its long Absence.

To this I answer, That while the Atmosphere of the Air was free from infectious Effluvia, and had nothing in it to render it noxious, the Rays of the Sun met with nothing to act upon to render them hurtfully affecting upon this Globe or its Inhabitants; for without those sulphurous Particles that are now

* Whose Light of the Moon might likewise be more useful to the Creatures of inferior Rank, whose Constitutions might require it to gather their Food by, which might thoroughly support their Natures, from one of its Revolutions to another.

floating in the Air, (by the Change that ensued on Man's Disobedience) there was no such thing before as calorifick or frigorisick Effluvia therein, but the Atmosphere was pure and untainted with them; and the Rays of the Sun, where they meet not with proper Subjects to act upon, can no ways afflict; so that the Sun's Presence for so long, during the Air's Purity, would only produce that kindly Warmth that was necessary for the bringing to, and continuing in, Maturity the Earth's Products, that were necessary for the Pleasure and Support of its Inhabitants; so that no degree of scorching Heat could then offend either the Earth's Fruits or Animals: And as there were no Particles of Matter to entertain the Rays of the Sun so as to become noxious in the Day-time, so neither were there any to become hurtful in the Night, during the Sun's long Absence; for those Particles that have a sulphurous Matter in them so as to become *calorifick* by the Sun's Presence, the same by the Sun's Absence will also become *frigorisick*; so that where the one has no Being, the other cannot; and therefore, as the Atmosphere of the Air was free from such Effluvia, no troublesome Effects of either *Heat* or *Cold* could arise.*

So

* We find in this State of things, the Power of the Air upon high Mountains, (where there is wanting such a Collection of the Sun's Rays as Plains and Vallies afford) to retain its frigorisick Quality, and very rarely to admit of a change by the Heat of the Sun to dissolve those Particles into calorifick ones, as in Plains and Vallies where there arises a Refrangibility of its Rays,

So that the Air, in the primitive State of this Globe's Creation, not having any saline or sulphurous Effluvia dispersed in it, could not be any ways affected, by the long Presence of the Sun's Beams, with scorching Heat; nor by the Sun's long Absence could any Cold prevail any ways to annoy or offend the Earth's Inhabitants. † For

thro' a mutual Collection and Concourse; as for example, The *Alps* of *France* and *Spain*, lying nearer the Perpendicularity of the Sun's Rays than *England*, yet being vastly above the common Surface of Plains, cannot collect the Sun's Rays to correct those frigorifick Particles, which even, in Summer, continue their Quality in the Presence of the Sun in its Meridian Altitude; which most plainly shews, that the Sun of itself having not proper Effluvia to act upon, or where it has, if not properly situated for Collection of its Rays, it looeth that Power, that proper Matter and due Disposition would afford it.

† So then the whole Globe of the Earth was equally habitable as well under the Poles as elsewhere; there was then no Division of the Globe into frigid, temperate and torrid Zones; Temperance then only prevailed throughout all Climates, and Days and Years were alike throughout the whole Earth, only with respect to the different Altitude and Situation of the Sun, whose Rays, having nothing offensive to act upon, could never have become troublesome to those under its Perpendicularity, nor wanting of Nourishment to those who received them the most obliquely; This may also serve to prevent an Objection which might arise, from the now Uninhabitableness of the Globe under the *Poles*, because they now have their Days and Nights, half a Year long, which is the only thing that renders those Places and the neighbouring *Islands* so incommodious for Habitation; But the present State of things, by the Alterations in Nature, and Changes in the Atmosphere, are rendered entirely different from their first Purity; and therefore tho' it is only under the Poles that Days and Years are now synonymous, yet upon the aforesaid Consideration of the Changes and Alterations in Nature (of which hereafter) those Places are hereby rendered the most incommodious and uninhabitable, that in this Case carries the nearest Resemblance to the primitive Creation, in the Similarity of Days and Years; because by the aforesaid Changes, the Nature and Constitution of Air, Vegetables, and Animals have undergone such violent Deviations from their original Perfections.

For as to Creatures of inferior Rank to Mankind, their Natures might likewise be proportion'd to that State of Purity, and adapted to the agreeable Pleasures and Delights of that Happiness that was consequent upon so pure a Creation. And now no Enmity ever appear'd amongst the different Species of Creatures, nor with one another of the same Kind, but a true Complacency, Love and Delight in each other; there was no Voraciousness amongst Beasts and Birds; the Lion and the Lamb were entirely Friends; the small Birds were in no Fear of the Eagle and Hawk, but a strict *Alliance* and *Confederacy* was maintained amongst all Ranks, Kinds, and Species of Animals; and the small Fish never dreaded Destruction from those of greater Bulk and Strength; so that a perfect *Harmony* and *Beauty* appear'd thro' the whole *Creation*: No Fears and Jealousies; no Malice and Envy; no Animosities; Falshoods, and Detractions, Defamations and Cruelties: But on the contrary, Boldness, and true Loyalty; Love and Peace; Friendship, and Truth prevailed: And the Happiness of the whole consisted in every one's promoting the mutual Tranquility of each other.

And now were it only to regain this happy Estate of *Purity*, who could not but apply themselves thereto, by all possible Methods, with the utmost Application? But as this is, by Man's Transgression, become irrecoverably lost in this present State, the nearest we can arrive to a Similitude of it here, is, by striving

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against

against the natural Corruptions and Infirmities that Man's Degeneracy from the first Command of *God* has involv'd us in : I say the nearest we can arrive towards *this primitive Purity*, is to exert our utmost Endeavours to follow the Precepts given us by *Christ*, in being *kindly affection'd one to another, forbearing and forgiving one another ; in being merciful, true, just, meek, lowly and charitable ; and studying not only our own but others Good ; not rendring evil for evil, nor railing for railing ; but contrariwise blessing for cursing, and hereby provoking one another to Love ;* for by this means all Enmity would lose its Force, because those, who were the most guilty of it, would in Time be ashamed to abuse them from whom they could receive no other Retaliations but of *Good for Evil*, so that hereby they would be induced, not only to revere and admire the contrary Practices of those they had abus'd, but also to acknowledge themselves unworthy of such Returns, and hereby might probably endeavour to alter their own unworthy Treatment, and so by degrees 'tis likely they might bring even these into love with such a *Spirit of Meekness*, and create in them an Imitation of such exemplary Prudence : And could the World once be persuaded to endeavour to excel in these and the like Virtues, we might hope to see a World of much greater *Purity* than what has generally, thro' Corruption, attended the Inhabitants of it ; and tho' this is what we can only wish for in this State, yet be assured that the greater Attainments every one makes in these *Virtues*, the more present Satisfaction

faction will accrue to them, and the nearer they will arrive to a *divine and inward Peace of Mind*, and to a Taste of that primitive pure Happiness that would have been enjoy'd upon an Obedience to the first *Law* given to Man.

S E C T. II.

Of the Change that ensued on Man's Disobedience.

THUS having taken a short View of the primitive Purity of the Creation of *this* Globe and its Inhabitants, I come now to consider the *Changes and Alterations*, that God in Wisdom made consequential upon *Man's Disobedience*: And as I have gone upon supposition of the Earth's only having an Annual Motion about the Sun upon its first Formation, and thereby made it appear, that such a *Revolution*, without a *Diurnal Rotation*, might suit the Occasions, and add to the Happiness, of that *pure Estate*; so I may probably add, that it might much better suit them than the continual Intervals of such short Revolutions of the present Returns of so many Days and Nights, which measure out Weeks and Months, to constitute the Yearly Calendar; for then as all things were created pure, and would have remained so, if there had been no Change or Alteration; so as the less Variableness in the Creation shew'd the greater Perfection, therefore one Motion

of the *Globe must shew more Stability and best answer the end of the future Contingencies that the All-wise Creator reserv'd in his own Power to execute, by changing its present Order to Disorder, if Man should change his *Purity* to *Impurity* by Transgression.

Now as it appears probable that the Earth had only an Annual Revolution round the Sun in its first Formation, then, whatever was lodg'd in its Bowels, there was no Offensiveness in its Atmosphere, but every thing destructive to Nature was properly confined from displaying its Noxiousness, but upon proper occasions might be made use of to execute the Designs of the All-wise *Creator* and *Governor* of his Workmanship.

And now, his reasonable Creature, *Man*, whom God had appointed *Governor* of this Globe, and all the Animals upon it, by his Transgression of the *one* Command of *God* became obnoxious to the Threatning due to his Disobedience, with whom the *whole Creation* (upon his account) *became subject to Vanity, not willingly, &c.* *Rom. viii. 20.* Therefore the Effects of *Man's* Transgression did not only affect him and his Posterity, but the whole visible Creation; so that all Animal and Vegetable Beings, with Earth, Air and Waters upon and within the whole Globe, by some sudden Change

* It may be observ'd, that the menstrual Motion of the *Moon* is exactly commensurate with *its* diurnal Rotation, so that *its* Days and Nights are exactly proportion'd to its Revolution with, and round the Earth; its Day and Night being exactly compleated between one Change thereof and another, which is plain from its always respecting the Earth with the same *Phasis*.

of the first Production, are involv'd in the Punishment; as in all States and Kingdoms the Vigilance or Negligence of their *Governors* either promote the Happiness and Safety or occasion the Ruin and Overthrow of their Subjects: But which way can the whole Creation suffer together, except the Cause of their suffering be universal? Can any imagine that *Adam's* Transgression, by eating of the *forbidden Fruit*, could not only render him and his Posterity's Nature mortal and corruptible, but also the Contagion should thereby be spread to all this Globe and Inhabitants, without some strange Alteration and Change in the *first Chain of Harmonious Concords*? This can never appear reasonable; there must therefore be some other Cause to produce such *Effects*, which equally affected the whole *Globe* and all its *Inhabitants*: And as the Commencement of the Earth's Diurnal Rotation, upon the Fall of *Adam*, was capable to produce such *Effects* as we find were consequent upon it; so the *Consequences* being prov'd that would naturally follow such *Causes*, will at least prove the *Causes* of such *Consequences* extremely probable, if not demonstrate them to an establish'd Truth.

And that the Consequences of the Earth's receiving its Diurnal Rotation, upon the Fall of *Adam*, would naturally occasion the Effects we find produc'd in the Change and Alteration of things in the Antediluvian State, appears very reasonable; which I shall first take notice of, before I come to consider the further Changes wrought by the Deluge, of which in the next Section.

I have in my former Discourse of the *Creation* and *Deluge* observed, that upon the sudden Rotation of the Earth, it would be broke into several *Chasms* and *Fissures*, from whence issued sulphurous and infectious Particles into the Atmosphere of the Air; which by degrees worked upon the Vitals of every Animal and subjected them to Mortality. It may be further observ'd, that after this Subjection to Mortality, all Nature was chang'd from *Purity* to *Impurity*; from Love and Delight in each other, to Enmity and Selfishness; not only in Mankind but in other Creatures also; therefore as the *Effect* was the same according to the different Dispositions of Creatures, it must proceed from one and the same *Cause*; and as all things were at first created in Stability, so some great Change must ensue to throw this universal Stability into Disorder, and alter that which was created pure, and render it reducible to its *original Dust*: For now by the noxious, saline, and sulphurous Particles entering the Atmosphere of the Air, (thro' the Earth's Diurnal Rotation) the Air becomes impure, corrupt, and decaying to Nature, and the Waters also partake of the same Impurity.

And as this Rotation would be a sudden Surprise to the then Inhabitants of the Earth, yet after this Change of things they would have their Constitutions so alter'd by the *Effects* of it before observ'd, that they would find the frequent Returns of Day and Night now needful to their alter'd State, which is now (even hereby) become incapable to be supported without frequent returns of Rest: thus by the Earth's
Diurnal

Diurnal Rotation, the Nature and Constitution of things being chang'd, so the Desires and Necessities of this Earth's Inhabitants are adjusted to the present Scene of Affairs.

And now Contentiousness, Fierceness, Cruelty, Envy, Animosities, and Selfishness enter the *World*, from whence Inventions of Self-defence, Shelter from Shame and Cold, as *Cloathing*; Security from Thieves and Robbers, as Houses with *Locks* and *Bolts*, &c. Fears of Oppression in some, while others are inventing which way they may oppress and defraud: Hence proceeded the Cruelty of *Cain* in the Murder of his Brother *Abel*; and * *Lamech's* boasting of slaying one Man, from whom he only received a *Wound*; and a young Man from whom he only received an *Hurt*. And now amongst Animals the same Changes from their original Purity prevail, so that they also become averse to each other; not that before the Deluge we have reason to suppose they so frequently made each other a Prey, according to their Strength and Ability, as they have since; but no doubt their Disagreeableness to each other was awakened in proportion to the Alteration of Things from their *original Purity*.

Notwithstanding the Earth still retained such Fruitfulness by Tillage that its Productions were sufficient to support all Land Animals without being forced to make Preys upon one another; and very probably the scaly Inhabitants of the Waters might be supplied with Food without

* Gen. iv. 23.

being forced to this Thirst, tho' we have no account in the *Mosaic* History of the Food assigned them ; but as we find the eating of Flesh not mention'd, nor any occasion for it before the Deluge, we may imagine that the watry Inhabitants were as well provided for as the Land Animals ; so that we may reasonably believe that while Nature continued to produce such plenty of Fruits, and so near their primitive Purity, that the Instinct of Nature never led Creatures to covet to make Food of one another ; tho' they had, by the first Change of things, become selfish, and consequently might one covet what they saw another take possession of before them, and others might probably retaliate the same upon them ; so that Quarrels might prevail among them.

Notwithstanding all the Creatures of inferior Rank to Mankind were free from Transgression, as not being endued with that Capacity of Reason, and therefore not capable of having any *Law* given them to keep, and consequently under no Consciousness of any of their *Actions* perform'd by natural Instinct ; so that they were not made subject to Vanity by any *Act* of their own, that is, *not willingly*, but were permitted to become so, thro' the necessary Consequences, that ensued the Alteration of things upon Man's Disobedience. And therefore as it was not of their *Wills*, or thro' any *Act* of their own that they became *subject to Vanity*, so neither are they blame-worthy ; but tho' the Innocent are hereby made subject to the Punishment of the Guilty, there is a Hope of Deliverance

rance reserved for them ; for the 20th Verse of the 8th Chapter of *Romans* runs thus : *For the Creature itself was made subject to Vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in Hope.* What then must be this Hope ? It must be a Hope of Deliverance ; for Verse 21. *Because the Creature itself shall also be delivered from the Bondage of Corruption into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God.* So that not only all the Posterity of *Adam* were made Partakers of the Consequences of his Transgression, even while they were in his Loins, and incapable of any *Act* of their own ; but even Verse 22. *The whole Creation groaneth and travelleth in Pain together until now ; thro' the Consequences thereof.* But shall we accuse *Adam*, for our own *Disobedience*, and lay the blame of our *Sins* upon him ? No ; he had a *Law* given him, by the Transgression of which we are under the Sentence of temporal Death ; in these Words, which include in them both himself and Posterity, &c. *Gen. iii. 19. For Dust thou art, and unto Dust shalt thou return.* But we are under a new *Covenant*, and another *Law* is given us, which we are as capable of such Obedience to, as will, thro' *Christ*, be accepted, as *Adam* was of keeping the *Law* given him. Well then, what Disadvantages we are under thro' *Adam's* Transgression we have no cause to complain of, tho' being innocent of his *Disobedience*, we are become liable to the Consequences of it, since we are accepted into a new *Covenant*, by Obedience to which much greater *Rewards* are promis'd, thro' *Christ*, than what was lost by *Adam*.

Now

Now since (as above observ'd) we are as capable of performing our Part of the *new Covenant* so far as to be accepted of God, thro' our *Redeemer*; let us henceforth be watchful against Temptations; let *Adam's* being deceived warn us to be upon our *Guard* against the Deceits of our spiritual Enemies, *the World, the Flesh and the Devil*; for tho' we have so many Enemies to struggle with, let us remember that there is help in our Mighty General, *Jesus Christ*, unto whom we may always flee for Aid, Succour and Relief, who will never forsake those who put their *Trust* in him, nor *suffer them to be tempted above what they are able*: Let us, therefore, (under the present Vanities the whole Creation labours under, and by which we groan within our selves) wait with Patience for the *Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Bodies*, which thro' *Adam* must return to *Dust*, yet thro' *Christ* may be raised to *Glory*.

S E C T. III.

Of the further Changes that succeeded the Deluge.

NOW here it may be necessary to observe those further Alterations which ensued the Deluge, not observ'd in my former Accounts of it.

And now we find, in the first Place, that the Earth's Productions after the Deluge not being judg'd sufficient for the future necessary Sustenance

nance of its Inhabitants, the eating of *Flesh* was then allow'd, as a necessary Consequence of the Insufficiency of proper Supplies from Herbs and Fruits, to support the future Multiplication of the Animals on the Earth.

The Changes therefore by the Deluge must be very conspicuous, and may admit of a Philosophical Enquiry into the Nature of them, in which I shall take proper Care to form no Hypotheses or Suppositions that will not bear a Scriptural Sense.

And now the different Disposition of the Earth's Atmosphere *before*, and *after* the Flood, may be observ'd by the *Effects*; for after the Flood we find that the *Air* becomes still more infectious, and infils the same Infections by degrees into the Fruits of the Earth, and thereby the former Strength of *Nature* in both Man and Beast begins to grow less, and the Length of Life to abate, and to come to very short and uncertain Periods, in proportion, we may reasonably imagine, to the more Infectiousness of the Air's Qualities, that it was further tainted with by the Deluge; from the *Effects* of which we may form an Idea of the less Impurity of the *Air* in the Antediluvian State than in the present; for allowing Men to live as naturally now to an hundred Years, as they did then to nine hundred, it is nine to one odds, which must prove the Air to be so much more infectious now than then; and how this comes to be occasioned by the Occurrences of the Deluge I come now to consider.

And

And upon supposition of this Globe being involv'd in a Comet's Atmosphere at the Deluge, it may be made probable that the *Effects* that follow'd it would be naturally produc'd from such a *Cause*; and the Existence of any *Cause* is always produc'd by its *Effects*; and the Effects that follow'd the Deluge do naturally prove that the Earth has undergone *such* a Flood as the *Holy Writings* acquaint us with; and that *that* Flood has been the Occasion of the aforesaid Alterations in Nature cannot remain doubtful: The only Question then is, which way this Flood might be brought upon the Earth; which in the first place must be allow'd to be done by the Appointment of God, for such Reasons as were consistent with infinite Wisdom and Goodness; and if by natural Occurrences he should appoint to execute his Ends and Designs herein, how unsearchable must that Wisdom be in the Creation and adjusting such natural Causes as shall thus exactly correspond to the Execution of his Judgments at that very Time, that an immediate Interposition of divine Power would otherwise have been necessary to have affected it? And as God in infinite Wisdom commonly adjusts Causes in Nature as Instruments to fulfil his Will, so in the Consequences of all such Causes we may trace the Footsteps of Goodness and Mercy, all his Judgments being design'd to teach us Obedience, whereby we may escape the Wages necessarily due to incorrigible and irreclaimable Wickedness; in which the World had involv'd themselves before the Flood came and took them away.

Now

Now let us suppose the Deluge to be occasion'd by the Earth's being involv'd in the Atmosphere of a *Comet*, and thence see what Effects might be produc'd by such a Cause; and whether or no the Consequences it would naturally occasion be not found upon enquiry to succeed.

And if we consider the Way and Manner of a Comet's Approach to its *Perihelion*, and that thereby it cuts the Orbits of all the Planets of our *System*, it will not be difficult to imagine but that in its Passage it might be so adjusted as to dash its Tail or Atmosphere upon the Earth, which Comet's Atmosphere, being in its Chaotical Fluidity, might leave so great a Quantity of its ununiform'd Substance throughout the Atmosphere, and upon the Surface of the Earth, (which it might be involv'd in by its Diurnal Rotation in the Comet's Passage by it,) as should require forty Days before the Commotions of the Vapours thereby rais'd and hurried up and down, could come to any Settlement, so as to cease their Convulsions and Agitations: In this Confusion and Disorder all the Matter that this Comet's Atmosphere was created of, in its several respective Parts, would naturally diffuse themselves throughout our Earth, Air, and Waters, according to their several Qualities, but not in an Exactness of the Laws of their specifick Gravities, but in such wise as the Nature of that Hurry would admit: For tho' this Globe might have been a Comet before its Formation into a Planet, and consist of the same Parts of Matter that this Comet did, yet
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in its first Formation there was no Hurry or Disorder, but proper Care taken (as I have before observ'd) to prevent any Offensiveness either in its Surface or Atmosphere; but in this Disorder all saline and sulphurous Particles join with, and diffuse themselves into the Atmosphere of the Air, and form themselves into destructive Bodies, which, being in their Infancy, would take up a proportionate Time to grow to a Maturity of Destructiveness, as would answer to the Age of the World after the Deluge; and as it had its Infancy, so Maturity and Age must succeed; agreeable to which the * Heavens are said to wax old as doth a Garment, and as a Vesture will be folded up. Of which more when I come to treat of the last and final Change of Things. So the further Changes, that have succeeded the Deluge, have naturally reduced Things to a State of more Uncertainty, and Instability, whereby all Things created here tend still much sooner to Corruption, and are now drawing towards a Conclusion, *groaning under Bondage*, and waiting for a *Restitution*.

It may be observ'd likewise what Changes the Infection of the Air has wrought in Animals and Vegetables; for where there was proper Constitutions and Natures in either, the different Streams of its Infectiousness have acted upon whatsoever is capable to give it Entertainment. Hence have proceeded the Fierceness

* That is, the Atmosphere of the open Air, which is frequently in Scripture call'd Heaven, wherein the Fowls are said to fly.

and Voracity of some Animals according to the Constitutions and different Qualities that these infectious Effluvia had to act upon, nay and also poisonous Qualities where there was fit Entertainment for them, either in Animals or Vegetables ; but as we see these things are common only to such and such Species of either kind, so Man that is still endu'd with Reason, should be so far guided by that, as to imitate the greatest Innocence amongst his Fellow-Creatures, which are often in Scripture set forth as Examples of Imitation, and not entertain the poisonous Qualities of those who have not Reason to direct them, or Power to avoid what the natural Corruption of things has laid them under a Necessity (not Choice) to partake of. For even the smallest and minuteſt Inſects, not viſible to the unaffiſted Eye, in the Air and Waters, which we commonly now take in with our Meat, Drink, and Breath, partake of ſome degree of Noxiouſneſs, and become offensive and decaying to Nature.

Thus all things by Man's Transgreſſion are receded from the Purity of the Creation ; ſome Animals are become voracious, while others that had not thoſe Qualities in them to be wrought upon, ſo as to ſeek any Food that way, are oppreſſed with natural Fears and Dread of their Enemies, who, by all ſubtil Stratagems and natural Cunning, lay wait to make them a Prey, and rejoice to obtain their End.

Hence Bloodſhed, and Murders ; Wars, and Confuſions ; Strifes, and Envyings ; Frauds,
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and Deceits ; Thefts, and Robberies, and all manner of Inhumanities have prevail'd amongst the Sons of Men : And how far this is from the Original Purity of the Creation may be consider'd from the short View I have taken of it.

Now if this *whole Creation* be thus subjected to *Vanity*, by the Transgression of *Man*, ought we not to lament for and pity the Animals of inferior Rank ? for they were not guilty of the Breach of any Law, but created pure, yet (as I have before observ'd) not with that sufficient Reasonableness as to have any *Law* assign'd them, yet it is plain, with sufficient Senses to be capable of the Pleasures of *Life* ; and therefore if the whole Creation suffer'd, were reducible to suffer *bodily* Pains and Miseries, which could not be in their *original Purity*.

Let this deter Man from exercising Cruelty to any of his Beasts, that are now given him for Servants, which ought to be us'd with that Gentleness and Compassion, which Reason and Humanity will direct. Nay I cannot see, in one Sense, why they should not have the same Treatment from us, as we would desire from our Masters, or those who have a Power or Authority over us : This Law seems to be the very Voice of Nature to every reasonable Creature ; save only that these Creatures are now allow'd to become our Food ; yet even in taking their Lives, a regard ought to be had that it may be done in a Way that may be least afflicting to them, and without any Delight in doing
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ing it, thereby to make it an *Act* of Cruelty. Indeed according to the present Scene of Affairs, their Lives are not worth living; for as the foresaid Changes of Nature have rendered the whole Creation thus full of Vanity, the taking the Lives of Creatures as above, can be no Disadvantage to these innocent Animals, who are hereby removed from their further Fears and Slaveries, which they groan under.

And as the Lives of Men are also made burdensome, and not worth living, if it were not for a future Hope of better and more durable Things; so by the Goodness of God are they become vastly more short, and uncertain, tho' he has reserv'd the Issues of our Life and Death in his own Hands, forbidding, in the first *Law* ensuing the Deluge, the shedding of *Man's* Blood, and the Eating the * Blood of such Animals, whose Flesh he allow'd for Food.

And thus even by this Change wrought by the Deluge, there are several Blessings to a Spiritual Mind that naturally flow from it, and which may be said in some part to be a Removal

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* Which Law being given to *Noah*, I think could not be peculiar to the *Jews* only, but to all *Noah's* Posterity, which seems to be confirm'd by the Council of the *Apostles*. when they, by the *Holy Ghost* wrote to the *Gentile* Converts, *Acts* xv. 29. In the Constraint laid upon them, the eating of *Blood* is there mention'd to be abstain'd from, with Meats offer'd to Idols, Things strangled, and Fornication. Our Saviour's declaring,
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val of the Curse on the Ground by Man's Fall, as the *Reverend* and *Pious* Dr. *Sherlock*, in his excellent *Dissertations upon Prophecy*, supposes. I shall with all due Submission to his superior Learning and sacred Office, give my Opinion of the meaning of *Lamech's Prophecy* concerning his Son *Noah*: *Gen. v. 29.* *This same shall comfort us concerning our Work and Toil of our Hands, because of the Ground which the Lord had cursed.*

In this Prophecy of *Lamech* concerning his Son *Noah*, may first be signified God's making choice of him, (as only being found righteous before him in the Antediluvian World) to establish with him a *Covenant of Peace*, whereby to preserve him and his Family from the common Destruction, intended to be executed on the whole human Race, who had turned all his Favours into Wantonness, notwithstanding the Toils and Labours they had been subjected to by *Adam's* Transgression; which Subjection to Toil and Labour tho' it should continue and survive the Deluge, so that the Earth should still require Tillage, yet God would give a Blessing to the Labours of his future Race, and give them fruitful Seasons during their abode upon the Earth; and not only so, but shorten the wearisome Toil and Labour of

that which goes into the Man, defiles not the Man, can be no Objection to this, because it is plain he spoke it only on account of eating with unwashed Hands.

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their Hands in removing them much sooner from it, and receiving them, that should be found worthy, to a State of *Rest from their Labours*, thro' the Promise of the *Messias* made to *Adam*; and whatever Promise was made to *Adam*, and not fulfilled before the Flood, must necessarily belong, in all its Rights and Privileges, to *Noah*; since the whole Human Race, besides him and his Family, should be involv'd in a total Overthrow, and therefore it must remain only in him that the Promise of *Christ* could be continued; which Promise seems to be taken notice of, and included in *Lamech's* Prophecy, (of which hereafter.)

So then, not only the Curse on the Ground, and all other Disadvantages arising from *Adam's* Transgression, would be allay'd by his Posterity's Easement of the Length of their Toil and Labour, but after the few Years they should toil and work here they might be fitted to inherit those greater Advantages that should be made over to them by the Merits of that *Saviour*, or *Deliverer*, that should proceed from and come of his future Race; so that here is not only a Promise of an Easement from the Length of Man's Toil and Labour, but also of an Admission to a Blessedness to those that *die in the Lord*, and a *Rest from their Labours*.

Whereas the Length of the Lives of the Antediluvians, though they had the Promises of *Christ* to recover Mankind from the Sin of *Adam*, upon an Obedience to a *Second Covenant*; yet the Abuse of their Longevity had

caus'd a general, nay, excepting *Noah* and his Family, an universal Degeneracy from, or Disregard to this *new Covenant*, by pursuing the Concerns of the *Body* and neglecting those of the *Soul*, which appear'd to them to be of small Consequence, because the Concerns of *it* were at such a distance; so that their Youth and Strength being spent in the Gratification of their sensual Appetites, their Habits were thereby become so strong therein, that it might be impossible to remove them in decay'd Age, and they might likewise, even at 8 or 900 Years of Age, have Views of living more than one of our Ages now, or at least flatter themselves with it to the very last, and so think it soon enough to take care of the Soul, till it was too late to take any Thoughts about it.

But thro' the Alterations that succeeded the Deluge, Men's Lives became shorter and shorter, so that in process of Time his Posterity could not expect to live one Ninth of the Time of the Antediluvians, and were very uncertain of that, so that Religion could not then be so shuffled with; it would therefore be necessary that *Religion* should be the very *first* and *chief* Concern of all Men, that hereafter should be born into the World; because they would have very short Views of Temporal Affairs, but Views of *Eternal* Treasures upon a well-spent Life, in the midst of their Toil and Labour for the Concerns of the Body, which would afterwards be eased, by being made much shorter.

This

This therefore I take to be the Intent and Meaning of *Lamech's Prophecy*, concerning his Son *Noah*, who should comfort them concerning the Work and Toil of their Hands, because of the Ground which the Lord had cursed.

In which likewise we may further observe, (for there is generally a very extensive Signification in most of the Prophetick Declarations) that this may not only relate to the State of the World, from the Flood to the Consummation of it by Fire, and the happy Estate of the Militant Church of Christ, but also to that far happier and most transcendently glorious State of the Church Triumphant, to be expected, thro' that promised Seed to come of his future Race, when all Subjectness to Change would be wholly removed, and all Toil and Labour of Hands should entirely cease.

Let the Words of the Prophecy be considered. *This same, that is, Noah, shall comfort us*: Whence shall this Comfort proceed? concerning the Work and Toil of our Hands; but the Work and Toil of our Hands is still continued, but made much shorter than before, therefore short Life must be a Comfort. But Nature is averse to Death, and every thing living observes the Laws of Self-Preservation, and shuns Death as a Terror; which way then can it be a Comfort? or which way could *Lamech* see the Comfort of it? Certainly it must be in *Christ*, that could give Hopes of Comfort thro' the Revelation of *Life and Immortality* after Death.

But it may be said again, that this Comfort to proceed from *Noah*, was said to be *because of the Ground which the Lord had cursed*. And if the Removal of that Curse did not succeed the Deluge, where is the fulfilling of that Prophecy?

I have before observ'd, in what Sense the Deluge could only be judg'd a Comfort or a Blessing, *viz.* in shortening Men's Toil and Labour, by shortening their Lives, which none but a spiritual Mind can judge a Comfort: I am apt therefore to believe that the Completion of this Prophecy remains yet to be fulfill'd, until the Removal of all Causes of Change in the present State of Things in this Globe, by not only a Restitution of its original Purity, but its being thoroughly render'd incapable to admit or undergo any further Alteration; which Restitution of all Things and Resurrection of all Men upon the Earth, to receive the Reward of their Work, and rest from their Labours, was to come thro' that promised Messiah, that was to proceed from or come of the Race of *Noah* according to the Flesh. To this I take the spiritual Sense of *Lamech's* Prophecy to extend; and as a Pledge of his making good the Promises of the Messiah in his Posterity, he superadds the Promises of many additional Temporal Blessings to *Noah's* obedient Race, as blessing their Labours with fruitful Seasons and Plenty of this Life's Necessaries, during their short abode upon Earth. As to that Passage in *Job*, (which Dr. *Sherlock* very reasonably concludes

concludes to respect the Antediluvian State) of God's commanding the Sun and its not rising, and sealing up the Stars: Why may we not as well imagine this to proceed from the darkening Mists of that State? which, we may very well suppose, were all the supplies they then had to water and refresh the Earth; the Rarity of the Air before the Deluge having not that Dispersion of the Quantities of sulphurous Particles, for the Rays of the Sun to cause to become so calorifick as to eject themselves so far into the Earth and Waters to draw up sufficient Quantities thereof, to gather themselves together so as to return in large Drops of Rain, and to cause Tempests, with Thunder and Lightning, and the like: For we have no other Account from *Moses* of the Earth's being watered with any thing but Mists, which Mists might probably arise as soon as the Sun set, and deprive many of the Earth's Inhabitants of the Sight of the Stars, which at some Seasons and in some Latitudes might likewise prevail all the Day long, whereby the *Stars* might be said to be *sealed up*, and the *Sun* commanded that it *rose not*, without any Interposition of Storms and Tempests; which we find not mentioned before the Flood, and it is reasonable to believe from the Nature and Constitution of Things in that State, that they then had no *Being*: Which likewise seems to be further confirm'd by God's placing a *Bow* in the Clouds, as a Token of his *Covenant with Noah, and every living Creature* upon the Earth, that we would no more
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curse the Earth for their sakes, by bringing another such Flood to drown every *living Creature*; for if this *Bow* had been there before, it could not have become a *Token* of a *New Covenant*, because a *Token* of a new *Covenant* must be some new *Institution*, as the *Token* of God's *Covenant* with *Abraham* was the solemn *Institution* of *Circumcision*: And it is certain that the Sun's Rays reflecting upon a due Disposition and Situation of a Cloud to the Eye of the Spectator, would (without a miraculous Interposition of Divine Power) naturally have produced the like Effects, as well before as after the Deluge.

And now we may observe, that as the Earth, Air, and Waters have undergone several Changes and Alterations, and are still liable to future Contingencies, so we see no State of Weather stable or to be long depended on; for by the continual Agitation of the Atmosphere of the Air, by the Effects of the Sun's Presence and Absence, we find such Convulsions and Perturbations to be produced therein, as must necessarily be occasioned by some Disorder introduced into it, that had not a necessary Being there in the Earth's first State of Purity: And as we find that the present State of all Things is by far more unhealthful, than in the Antediluvian Days, it must be a plain Demonstration that some great Change has happen'd to effect it, and which in probability might be occasion'd by a Comet, as above suppos'd.

Now

Now if we look into the Difference of these two Estates, as before describ'd, I think the different Proportion of the present from the Antediluvian State is in a tolerable Measure accounted for.

And now let us look into the present Phænomena of the Atmosphere of our Globe, and observe the strange Occurrences therein produc'd, and in particular those Wonders of Nature that are acted upon the Theatre of the open Air, as *Tempests, Thunder, and Lightning, with Aurora Boreales, or Lights in the North, &c.* and examine into the Causes of their Existence, and how the All-wise Creator of Nature, thro' Man's Transgression of his *first* Command, and almost universal Rejection of his *Second* Covenant, has for wise Reasons reduc'd the State of the Air to its present Uncertainty and Infectiousness, and implanted therein such *Causes* as the *Effects* produc'd are dependent upon.

In some of which I shall advance my Sentiments of the Causes God has imploy'd in Nature, to answer his wise Designs; even in such Phænomena as I have not seen accounted for to my own Satisfaction. And first of *Lightning* in a *clear* Sky.

This I take to be a Meteor collected from sulphurous Particles rarified, surrounded by a Body of grosser or common Air, which pressing round these rarify'd Particles causes them naturally to ascend till they come to a Region of as pure and light Air as themselves, which not only gives them the Liberty to expand and
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open to their natural Extent, and releases them from the Confinement of that cooler and groffer Body of Air below, which kept them from taking Fire in their Passage, but now by their Freedom from Confinement, by the aforesaid cooler Air, they naturally take Fire, and break forth into Lightning, which is more or less according to the Quantity of the Exhalations.

Of the same Nature we may suppose an * *Aurora Borealis*, or *Light in the North*, to be of, when a prodigious Quantity of these sulphurous Particles are gathered together, and according to the Quantities and Agitations of this combustible Matter, being as before in a Freedom of Expansion and in an Equilibrium with the purer Air of that Region (for these sulphurous Particles are only occasional Inhabitants of it, thro' Rarification) as they free themselves from the groffer Air they were clouded with, they immediately assume that fiery Propensity with which they are endued; and when once this Fire is kindled, amongst such vast and prodigious Quantities of the same Matter, it darts forth

* The Reason why these Meteors appear always from the Northern Parts is because the Sun has not so much Power in the *Frigid Zones* to rarify the Waters in such Quantities as in the Temperate and *Torrid Zones*, and therefore the Exhalations there are for the most part only Airy, without Watry Inclosures: Hence we have commonly fair Weather when the Wind blows from the Northern Parts. And from this Hypothesis it may be suppos'd, that they of the Southern Temperate Zone may have such Lights likewise frequently from the South: which whether they have or no, I leave to the Observations of those whose Travels may inform them.

thereinto and continues to expand its Fury throughout the whole Mass of Matter of the like Nature, whereby it drives on its Flames and Forces, and makes so many fearful Representations.

* *Fire-Balls, Fire-Drakes, and Shooting-Stars*, may likewise be imagin'd more contracted Meteors, that carry a grosser Substance along with them, like unto Sponges filled with the like sulphurous Air, and made up of combustible Matter capable to take Fire as aforesaid, which breaking forth destroys the hollow Cavities of its Spunginess that supported it in the Air, and therefore descends in a Flame, which continues longer or shorter time in its Descent, according to its Force and Substance to preserve it from Extinction in the grosser and cooler Air.

These seem to me to be the natural Causes of these Meteors and Appearances in a *clear and transparent Air*. I shall now consider the Concourse of those Meteors, which form themselves into Tempests of *Thunder and Lightning*.

And here, I suppose, the like aforesaid Sulphurous Particles by mixing themselves with Watry Effluvia rais'd from the Seas, Rivers, and Watry Places, and incorporating themselves

* This Meteor being of much larger Contraction than Fire-Drakes, tho' of the same Nature, commonly falls thro' the Air without Extinction, and retains so much Force as to do very great Damage if its Fall be not in the Seas or distant from Buildings, &c.

there-

therein, are in great Quantities, surrounded with Water, and become the Cavities of Watry Bladders; and these Sulphurous Particles by expanding themselves in these Watry Inclosures, become (by this Infusion) much lighter than the Air upon the Earth's Surface, by the Pressure of which they naturally ascend till they come to an Equilibrium with the Air, but never rise so high as only Airy Exhalations, because surrounded with the heavier Fluid of Water; and as innumerable Numbers of these Watry hollow Bladders come together, so according to their Strength and Numbers they form themselves into a greater or less Collection, and by their Equilibrium in the Air they join one to another, and become a massy Cloud, and, in a strange Commotion, darken the Air, and that Combustible and Sulphurous Matter contain'd in the Hollows of these Watry Bladders, in a strong Agitation takes Fire in the manner aforesaid, and breaks forth into Lightning; by which means some of these Bladders being broke, the Chain is unhing'd and the Rent continues very commonly from one side of the Cloud to the other, by which Rent and Burst of such a Chain of Watry Bladders, that terrible Noise of Thunder is continued till the Rent ceases, and sometimes after the first Flash of Lightning, there may be others of these Bladders, upon their Breach prepared for their sulphurous Cavities to take Fire, and then more Flashes of Lightning succeed after one another: We may likewise observe that while the Rent continues
to

to disperse itself thro' the * Cloud, and the Air contain'd in the Watry Bladders is let out and can no longer support the Water, the Bladders (so many breaking together) run one into another and form Drops of *Rain*, and are larger or less according to the Multitudes that catch together in their Breach and Descent, and may be observed to fall in much greater Quantities, and in greater Drops and Hurry, and in more sudden Dashes upon the Breach aforesaid during the Thunder-Crack, than in the Intervals.

And how wonderful is it to see sometimes these Drops catch'd, and frozen in their Descent to the Earth? What strange Degree of Cold must it be that shall thus almost instantaneously congeal these Waters so thoroughly, even in their just leaving that combustible Matter that in their former Lodgment had taken Fire, of the most impregnable Force of any deriv'd from the Sun? In what strange Commotions, and Agitations, must the State of the Air be in at this Time? What disagreeable Disturbances and confus'd Contradictions are here in Vicissitude of the troubled Atmosphere? Every thing therein seems disordered and out of Tune, and cannot be otherwise accounted for than from that Disorder Nature has been thrown into by

* Thus the Air in the Watry Bladders is lighter than the Air wherein they hang, because born down lower by their Watry Vessels, upon the Breach of which the heavier Air rusheth in, from whence proceeds that Noise of Thunder.

the * Changes that have ensued *Adam's* Transgression of the First *Law* of God, and his *Posterity's* Contempt and Violation of his *Second Covenant*.

And now stand amazed, Oh Inhabitants of the Earth! and behold the Effects that Sin has brought into the World! All Nature groans under the Load of it, and shall Man alone remain unconcerned, who only was the Cause of all this Disorder?

* Hence we may learn, that as the various Changes our Atmosphere has been proportion'd to admit of, as the Extreams of Cold and Heat, (being subject to neither Extream in its first Formation) so the Atmosphere of the other Planets of our System may be so proportion'd by their All-wise Creator, that Mercury may not receive any Degrees of the Sun's Heat to offend it, nor Saturn want any of its Warmth to refresh it, but their Atmospheres may be so proportion'd, that the Sun may appear thro' Saturn's with the same Splendor and Brightness, and afford it as much Warmth and Heat, as it may appear to and afford Mercury, and the rest, thro' their Atmosphere's different Entertainments of its Rays; since by the different Changes of our own Atmosphere, we may observe such different Effects thereof produc'd. For a further Confirmation of this Hypothesis, we are assur'd from the Holy Scriptures that the great Creator of Nature has upon Occasion of the Disobedience of the Rational Inhabitants of this Globe chang'd the Transparency of its Atmosphere from its Homogeneous Parts into such Heterogeneous ones, as deprived the *Egyptians* of the comfortable Rays of the Sun's Beams, while at the same Time the *Israelites* enjoy'd the common Benefit thereof, where the Air continued its natural Transparency: Likewise, upon our *Blessed Saviour's Crucifixion*, the whole Atmosphere was depriv'd of Light for three Hours, by God's withdrawing that Transparency from it, which at first he gave it, when in its Formation he said, *Let there be Light*: Which Command gave our Atmosphere those Homogeneous and Transparent Parts, which were necessary to afford such a Light and Heat to the Surface of this Globe from the Sun as should be agreeable to its Distance from it: And I cannot doubt but the same Wisdom, Goodness and Power have been observ'd in proportioning the Atmospheres of all other *Globes* agreeable to their Distances from their central *Luminaries*.

Let

Let the various Scenes of Providence be your continual Monitors; let the Cultivations of your Lands, your plowing and sowing, your reaping and gathering into Barns, and all your Labour and Toil of what kind soever, put you in mind of that Curse that ensued Disobedience; and from thence make these useful Inferences. If the Disobedience of our first Parents has brought Labour and Toil and Sorrow upon all their Posterity, who had no Hand in the Transgression; how ought we, now we are restored to a new Covenant, and are as capable to perform our Part of it, so far as to be accepted, as *Adam* was to have kept the *Law* given him, I say how ought we to labour after an Obedience to it, since we are thereby promised a much greater Happiness than was lost by our first Parents Transgression, and likewise as reasonably threaten'd upon our Disobedience, greater Punishments, than Labour and Toil, and Temporal Death?

Let the several Appearances in the Atmosphere shew us how many Instruments God has implanted in Nature to fulfil and execute his Designs, which are all now employ'd for our Good, in being so many Admonitions to us, to be in readiness, when, and which way soever, he shall order our Appearance before him, to give up the Accounts of our Stewardship, that we may then do it with Joy.

Let us, by observing the Uncertainty of the Air and Weather, and seeing how soon a clear Sky may become *tempestuous*, and a tempestuous one *clear*, be put in mind of the Uncer-

tainty of all Worldly Affairs, and how soon *Prosperity* may be reduced to Adversity, or *Adversity* be succeeded with Prosperity, that we may neither be puffed up by the *one*, nor too much dejected by the *other*.

Let the Lights in the North put us in mind, that the Air may become capable to take Fire of the most irresistible Force, whereby the Earth and Waters may be reduced to Flames, and be thereby thoroughly purg'd from all things now offensive in them; which I come to consider in the next.

S E C T. IV.

Of the Final Change to be expected.

NOW as our Atmosphere has undergone the Changes aforesaid, and is still subjected to further Alterations, as the Variableness of its present State may sufficiently inform us: So what we are foretold of the Final Change of Things in the Sacred Writings, we cannot at all doubt the Truth of them, no, if there were no other Things in Nature to convince us of their Veracity and Approach. But that the Course of Nature is drawing towards Dissolution, also appears in the Nature and Constitution of Things, and will be manifest from the foregoing and following Considerations.

We

We find, that the Nature of our Atmosphere, thro' the Changes thereof aforesaid, is in a continual Perturbation, and without Rest; and that in its Infancy, after the Deluge, it was more pure, till the destructive Particles, therein infus'd, gathered Strength, as before observed, and came to a Maturity; which being still hurried about in continual Agitations, producing the aforesaid Phænomena, so these things are the Forerunners of the final Change to be expected: For any Cause of Instability implies Decay, and Decay always includes Imperfection and Unstedfastness; and where Perfection and Stedfastness are wanting, there can be nothing durable and permanent; and what is not durable, must either in Time cease to be, or the Causes of Instability, Decay, Imperfection, and Unstedfastness be wholly remov'd.

Thus we find by our selves that we are under continual Changes, from our coming into the World till our leaving it: And as the present Changes we are subjected to, may convince us of our Change by Death; and as we are assured from Christ of the certain Resurrection of the Dead, who brought *Life and Immortality to Light*; so by the various Changes of the Earth, Air, and Waters, we may infer an unerring Conclusion, that they are drawing towards *Dissolution*; and as we have all the Reason in the World to believe (from the best Authority that can be given of future Events) that our Bodies will be rais'd up again and renewed, and rendered Permanent, Perfect, Sedfast and Undecaying, by be-

ing spirituliz'd and made durable, and not subject to any further Change; so such a Change will pass upon the whole Creation; for as all Things have been, with Man and thro' Man, made subject to Vanity, and do with him groan under the Bondage of Corruption, so they will also be *delivered into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God.* Rom. viii. 21.

So that a Restitution of all Things is fully set forth to be expected after the last and final Change, which we find drawing on: Every Age or Revolution of things shews forth Changes, and must consequently convince us that the present State or *Fashion of this World passeth away*, or that the *Heavens*, or open Air, *shall wax old as doth a Garment, and as a Vesture will be folded up, and they shall be changed.* Heb. i. 11, 12.

Now that the Atmosphere of the Earth, or these Heavens here spoken of, are waxing old, appears from the foregoing Account: And that this Atmosphere of the Earth is the Heavens here intended by the Text, will easily appear both from Reason, and other plain Texts of Scripture: And first from Reason; let us then imagine *Heaven*, according to the generally receiv'd Notion of the Word, a Place of Happiness, the Throne of God, the Receptacle of Angels and Saints, as in Scripture it is frequently us'd to signify: But this cannot be the *Heavens* here spoken of, we may assure ourselves; because such an Abode, where never any thing but Purity, Perfectness, Truth, Love, Justice and Mercy, Wisdom and Goodness were harboured, can
never

never be subjected to Change or Diminution ; for where there is no Corruption there can be no Decay, no Alteration, and consequently no Change to pass upon it. And this the All-wise Creator has constituted in the very Nature and Reason of Things : And that this Interpretation of the Word *Heavens*, in this Place, is consonant to other plain Texts of Scripture, where it signifies the same, will appear from observing it us'd, where the very Words of the same Sentence give it the self-same Meaning. One Instance will be sufficient from *Rev. xix. 17. The Fowls* are said to *fly in the Midst of Heaven*. In which Sentence what can be plainer than that this must signify the Atmosphere of the open Air ? Now having considered in what Sense the Word Heaven is here to be understood ; I come to consider their waxing old, as doth a Garment, agreeably to my former Accounts of the Air's Perturbations, unconstant and unsettled State, thereby subjecting it to *Decay*.

We may observe that every Thing of the Earth's Productions have their Time of coming to Maturity, producing their Species, and when old go to Decay and become at last only useful for Fuel : Thus a worn-out Garment becomes only fit to be folded up, and thrown aside, or put to dispatch out of the Way ; and the Earth's Atmosphere, being likened to a Garment, from its cloathing or surrounding the Earth as a Garment covers us, is a very natural and agreeable Comparison ; and its waxing old as one, must be a natural Result of its constant Vicissitudes and

Perturbations, whereby it is preparing for its Change: For Changeableness (as before observ'd) always implies Decay, and Decay always implies an Impossibility of Perpetuity, in the State and Condition of such Circumstances: But as the *Heavens* thus *wax old as doth a Garment*, and as a *Vesture* will be *folded up*; it follows in the next Words, *and they shall be changed*.

From which it may be observ'd that they shall not be totally consum'd in every Respect, but be changed or renewed, which St. Peter calls the Restitution of all Things, *Acts* iii. 21. Before which the Heavens and the Earth must undergo the Changes above mentioned; which Change St. Peter in his second Epistle, chap. iii. ver 10, informs us will be thro' a general Conflagration: *In which the Heavens shall pass away with a great Noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat: The Earth also and the Works that are therein shall be burnt up. Ver. 12. Wherein the Heavens also being on Fire shall be dissolved, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat. Ver. 13. Nevertheless we, according to his Promise, look for New Heavens, and a New Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness.*

From which it appears, that this Change will be wrought in the Elements of Earth, Air, and Water, which will be so refined that all Destructiveness, Disorder, Offensiveness, and Instability, with all their Causes will be taken away: This Fire will purge and refine all the Elementary Bodies of Heaven and Earth, and clear them from all manner of Infections and Annoyances;

ances; and as refin'd Gold it will come forth of this *fiery* Globe; for this will try the Purity of all the Substances that shall be found in the *Heavens* and the *Earth*, and every Thing that is any ways impure, by this Purgation will have all its Impurity destroy'd; and all the Dross of Imperfection will be wholly burnt up, so that the Remains shall come forth as Gold perfectly purified; and as a Bride adorned for her Husband, become the Place of the Church Triumphant, being now fitted for Christ and his Spouse, into which again no unclean thing can enter; so that *Whatsoever worketh Abomination or maketh a Lie* can have no Part, nor make any abode here for ever; but will be cast out as not fit Inhabitants for these Regions thus refined; where the Presence of the Lord God and the Lamb are the Light of it; so that whatsoever things are not pure, or those who are not refined from Sin by timely Repentance, and a due Disposition of habitual Virtue, will be so far from an Agreeableness to this Place of Purity, that their Dispositions of themselves will cause them to fly from and avoid it, as naturally as the Impurity of the whole Mass had separated itself from that which would abide this fiery Trial, and remain pure. But whither can the Wicked fly, when there is no Habitation or Abode fit for them? There can then be nothing else to receive them but the * Vacuum of the Universal Space, where there is nothing but Blackness of Darknes for

* See my Opinion thereof in my former Discourse.

ever, &c. Let us now consider the Words of St. Peter before mention'd in his Description of the general Conflagration: *In which the Heavens shall pass away with a great Noise.* By passing away it seems to me as if the Air or Atmosphere (here called Heaven) would be wholly consum'd, which also seems agreeable to those Texts in the *Revelations* of St. John, Chap. 21. Ver. 23. *And the City had no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon to shine in it; for the Glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof.* And Chap. 22. Ver. 5. is to the same Purpose: *And there shall be no Night there, and they need no Candle, neither Light of the Sun; for the Lord God giveth them Light; and they shall reign for ever and ever.*

But it may be ask'd how I wou'd infer from this that the Atmosphere should be destroy'd or taken away? I answer, because that the Atmosphere is design'd to collect the Lights of the Luminaries; and as the Occasion for their Lights will cease, so it is probable, the Cause of Admission thereof will cease likewise; for tho' the Sun and Moon should be continued after this final Catastrophe, yet without this Globe's Atmosphere was also continued, their Rays and Light could not be * entertain'd; and as there will be no need of them, so no Cause left to receive them. No need of them, because now

* Witness, neither Fire nor Candle will continue to burn without Air, and consequently neither Light nor Heat will be entertain'd without it; and therefore also, when the Atmosphere is wholly destroyed or changed the Fire will cease.

it is supply'd with infinitely refined Spiritual Light, far exceeding all Material ones ; even the transcendent Glories of the Beatifick Vision, which none can behold but those who have kept themselves undefiled from the World, or that have in Time relinquish'd and abhorred their former Defilements.

And why may we not as well imagine the Atmosphere of the Air to be destroyed, as all the Waters of the Ocean ? For we are informed from St. *John's* Vision of the New Heaven and Earth, *Rev. xxi. 1.* That *there was no more Sea.* And if the Fire that shall purge away all Impurity shall be made capable to dissolve all the Waters of the Seas, we may imagine that the Air may more easily be dissolved by its Rage and Fury, which in all probability will be the first thing that will take Fire ; for there is very good Reason to suppose it, if we consider the dreadful Effects of Lightning, which is generated in the Air, than which there is no material Fire upon this Globe, that we are acquainted with, more powerful : Of which kind we may suppose that to be, which was sent from Heaven, (or out of the Atmosphere of the Air) by God's Appointment, to consume *Elijah's* Sacrifice, with the Wood, the Stones, and the Dust. *1 Kings xviii. 38.* And lick'd up with it the twelve Barrels of Water that were pour'd upon the Sacrifice, and ran round the Trench about the Altar. And if this Fire sent from God, bred and contracted in the Air, had so powerful an Effect as at once to consume with the Sacrifice, the

the *Wood, Stones, and Dust*; of what prodigious Force must that Fire be, when once the whole Atmosphere of the Globe shall be prepared, by sulphurous Effluvia, to take Fire all at once? And as God has always made use of such kind of Fire, to execute his Purposes of Judgments, or Examples of Terror to Sinners; so this may inform us, that the Air may be made capable to take the *first* Fire in the general Conflagration. And this is likewise agreeable to *St. Peter's* Account; being by him mentioned as the first thing that should take Fire; *And the Heavens shall pass away with a great Noise.* And how dreadful must that Noise be, when the whole Atmosphere that surrounds the Earth shall be all in Flames, by such sulphurous Particles, of which Lightning and the dreadful Effects of it are only small Representations?

With what amazing Force then will these piercing Flames eject their bituminous Cascades into both Earth and Seas? Then will the prodigious Quantities of the Salts and Sulphurs within the boiling Ocean, with the Oils of the Finny Inhabitants and Waters themselves, take Fire, and disperse their Flames through the Earth and Air, with such Rage and Fury that will be beyond all Expression or Conception; for then all the Parts of the whole Earth, Air, and Seas, will be as one great Furnace or Globe of Fire; so that the most terrible Representations, of what we are now acquainted with, will come vastly short of striking the Imagination with any competent Idea of it. Now in this
Conflagration

Conflagration all things are upon Tryal; whatever is any ways impure, noxious, or offensive, must now be destroy'd; all Metals and Minerals will now undergo that Purgation, that all the Refiners upon Earth were not capable to produce, in one single Instance, of an Ounce of their most refined Gold; so that no Impurity will remain unconsumed, no not any thing but what is pure, and permanent, durable, and not subject to Diminution, Alteration, or Change: For the *Heavens being on Fire shall be dissolved, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat.* Nevertheless we, according to his Promise, look for *New Heavens and a New Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness.*

Now in the present State of Changeableness of Earth, Air and Waters, there is no Perfection to be expected, but an imperfect Endeavour after it, with *groaning within ourselves*, waiting for the *Adoption, to wit the Redemption of our Body*, which must likewise undergo a suitable Change, and a Dissolution of all Corruptions, after a Life of imperfect Obedience to the Gospel Precepts, before it can be made a fit Inhabitant of these blisful Regions: These new Heavens and new Earth thus purified is now fitted for the Abode of the Heavenly Host, and to entertain the Glory of God in Fulness of Lustre, where he will manifest himself to those, who, by *patient continuing in well-doing, have sought for Honour, and Glory, and Immortality*; for whom he has now prepared *Eternal Life*, by rendring them, and their Abode, perfectly refined,

fined, and having wholly remov'd all Subjectness to Change and Alteration ; and therefore now made them incapable of future Frailty or Decay.

And now we have taken a View of the present State of the Changeableness and Imperfection of the whole Material Creation belonging to us, or our Globe, we may, from hence, infer that the World could not be from Eternity, as some have falsely insinuated, nor in its present Circumstances can it continue perpetually. See the next Marginal Note.

And from the great and final Change to be expected, St. Peter very wisely infers by an Interrogation, 2 Peter iii. 2. *What manner of Persons ought ye to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness?* And then having assured us of God's Promise of New Heavens and a New Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness ; he adds again by way of Inference, *Wherefore, Beloved, seeing that ye look for such Things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in Peace, without Spot, and blameless.*

Thus the Expectation of this final Change should put us upon Consideration that we ought to spend this short and uncertain Life in Preparation for this certain Change, weaning our Affections from these fading, decaying and transitory Things, and be induc'd to strive after that Purity, that holy Conversation and Godliness, that may fit us for that Place of unchangeable Happiness, where no Uncleannefs can ever enter ; for in the new Heavens and new Earth only dwelleth Righteousness, and without Holiness

ness no Man can see the Lord. With what circumspect Watchfulness then ought we to guard against all manner of Impurity and Uncleaness; and with what unwearied Diligence should we strive to purify our Hearts from evil Concupiscence, Covetousness, which is Idolatry, inordinate Affections, Envy, Hatred and Malice? And how should we endeavour to excel in all Christian Virtues, in a general good Will to all Men, and in a true Endeavour to do all the good we can in promoting the Happiness of all as far as our Abilities will reach, whether in Temporal or Spiritual Affairs; but especially in Spiritual? To which we should have a View in all our Transactions, being the chief End of our Creation; for was it not for the Things of Futurity and Eternity, who could be fond of being here, for so short a Space, filled with Trouble, Care, and Perplexities; which can only be alleviated to a Christian, thro' the Expectation of the permanent and lasting and inexpressible Glories of that happy Estate of Perfection and Purity to be enjoy'd in these new Heavens and new Earth: Which Estate to be expected, one would think, no one could call in Question. I profess, I as fully expect and depend upon it, as I look for the Revolutions of Times and Seasons, and the Returns of Day and Night, and wish my Arguments may prevail against any Unbelief of these Things, if any such they shall meet with, and that they may have force to prevail with Men to an honourable Regard of the Authority of the sacred Scriptures, that

that reveal those things to us, and which, if well weighed and rightly understood, do not interfere with right Reason; for if it is plain from Reason (as you see it really is) that the Fashion of this *World* passeth away, then the present Things thereof must come to a Conclusion, and therefore they must (as above observ'd) have a *Beginning*; * and if they had had a *Beginning*, therefore they had a *Creator*; and as they had a *Creator*, undoubtedly this *Creator* would not create them and *Reasonable Inhabitants*, and leave them without Government and a Declaration of his *Will*: And that the Writings of the Old and New Testament are the Declarations of his Will appears from their being the only Platform of the best Laws that could be possibly composed, and from their Superiority to all Human *Invention*; witness the Darknes and Ignorance of those Nations that do want them, or are deprived of having them in their own Language: Not to mention the many Miracles that accompanied the Promul-

* My former Accounts to prove that whatsoever is subject to Decay must come to a Conclusion, will also prove the same Things, and for the very same Reasons, to have a Beginning; for whatever will end must begin, and none but a necessary Being could be without Beginning; and that necessary Beings which is without Beginning must be necessarily always the same, and therefore unchangeable and without End; and this our Blessed Saviour declares himself, when he said, *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Rev. xxii. 13.* But tho' the aforesaid Argument will really prove that whatsoever will end must begin, yet this will not imply that whatsoever began must end. 'Tis only the Circumstances of the present State of Affairs that prove the Conclusion or End of them, which notwithstanding may be capable to be renewed, and made permanent.

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gation of them. With what Courage therefore should we give all Diligence to be found of *Christ in Peace, without Spot and blameless*, that we may receive an Admission into those *new Heavens and new Earth*? The Glories of which I come now to consider.

S E C T. V.

Of a New Heaven and a New Earth.

I H A V E before endeavoured to make it appear probable that by the Purification of the Heavens and the Earth by Fire, the Air or Atmosphere, there called Heaven, would be wholly taken away, as being of no use to the refined Inhabitants of the new Heaven and new Earth, now become so thoroughly chang'd, that no Footsteps of former Things can be discovered. But if the Earth shall be so refined, and yet every Thing remain that was found to be pure and no ways corruptible, and only that; it may be ask'd, How cou'd the Earth's Atmosphere be wholly taken away, when in its primitive Purity, it is observed before, to be in a State of perfect Inoffensiveness, till infected by destructive Particles and Effluvia dispersed into it by after Contingencies, that ensued Man's Disobedience? And therefore why might not it also undergo a Purgation as well as the Earth, and still remain, and become a new Heaven? The very same Question might be ask'd concerning the Waters; but St. *John*, in his Vision of

of the new Heaven and Earth, says, *For the first Heaven and the first Earth were passed away, and there was no more Sea.* Now we may observe from this the Change that pass'd upon the Whole; *The first Heaven and the first Earth were passed away*, that is, as St. Paul styles it, *Heb. i. 12, folded up as a Vesture and changed.* But it may be ask'd, how changed or folded up? It may again be answer'd, not only from Impurity to *Perfection*, but also from the Fluidity of Air and Waters to the purest of *Solids*, there now remaining no Occasion of their Fluidity's Continuance, tho' refined to ever so great a Degree; for as the Inhabitants of this blessed Place have no need of Sun, Moon, or Candle for Light, so have they no need of Air to breathe in, nor in this State no need of Water for any Uses for which it was here serviceable: For the Inhabitants of this new Heaven and new Earth are not now supported by the Supplies of Food for Nourishment, Air to breathe in, or Waters to drink; so that their Bodies are also so changed, that they do not now live by the Circulation of the Blood and Fluids, which will likewise be changed and spiritualiz'd; for their Food is all Spiritual, and their Drink the Waters of Life.

But it may again be objected, If the Purity of the Air and Waters be hereby reduc'd into perfect pure Solids, since the Atmosphere of the Air is the Heaven here spoken of, then must this Heaven, by being thus changed, be wholly removed and destroyed, as to its encompassing
the

the Earth as a Garment : What then will be the new Heaven? Answer, As there will be no more Occasion for this Atmosphere (as before observ'd) so this will be supply'd by the Presence of God and Christ, whose Glory shall illuminate it : Every thing being removed, that before prevented their most immediate Presence, now admit it in Fulness of Glory, and is the *new Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven prepar'd as a Bride adorned for her Husband*, Rev. xxi. 2. Thus God's Presence in Fulness of Glory is the Ornament of this new Earth, so purified as to become the Habitation of God's Glory, which is the Wonder of the Heavenly Host ; and is represented by a great Voice from Heaven, breaking out into Admiration, Ver. 3. *Behold ! The Tabernacle of God is with Men, and he will dwell with them ; and they shall be his People, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.* *

Here we may observe ; *The Tabernacle of God is with Men*, &c. that is, the Fulness of his Glory is now manifested to those who have escaped the Pollutions of the World, whom he has now brought out of the *Bondage of Corruption* into *glorious Liberty*, and made meet Partakers of the Glories of his Presence in its fullest Splendor ; which *Tabernacle* of his Presence, Bright-

* Hence we may learn that the nearer we arrive to deny our selves of the present Corruptions, and the nearer we come to a Spirit of Purity, the more we may expect of the Divine Presence, Comfort, present Satisfaction of Mind and Foretastes of those unspeakable Delights to be enjoy'd in the Fulness of his Glory and Presence ; when all Imperfections, Lets and Hindrances to spiritual Pleasures, shall no more be a Thorn in the Flesh, nor a Messenger from Satan to buffet us.

ness and Glory encompassing the *new Earth*, thus refined from all things that obstructed his glorious Appearance, is now become the *new Heaven*, wherein dwelleth Righteousness, where there shall be *no more Death, Sorrow, Crying nor Pain* again for ever; *all Tears* being wiped away from the *Eyes* of the Inhabitants of these Celestial Regions, Ver. 4. For God saith, Ver. 6. *I will give unto him that is a-thirst (after Righteousness) of the Fountain of the Water of Life freely.* And Ver 7. *He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my Son.* Thus those, who by signaling themselves in departing from the enticing Corruptions and Gratifications of their sensual Appetites, who regard and are governed by the Dictates of God's Spirit upon them here, shall be entertained in these Heavenly Mansions newly prepared for the Reception of whatsoever shall be found fitted thro' Purity to inhabit them.

Ver. 8. *But the Fearful, Unbelieving, and the Abominable, and Murderers, and Whoremongers, and Sorcerers, and Idolaters, and all Liars, shall have their Part in the Lake, which burneth with Fire and Brimstone: Which is the Second Death.*

So that none can have any Admittance here, but those whose Endeavours after Purity, by Spiritual-mindedness, are become fit to have all Impurity remov'd from them, thro' the perfect Obedience of Christ made over to them; for by their former Endeavours after Perfection, they do now reap the End of their Aims; and have the Promises of the Gospel, which they
trusted

trusted in and rely'd on, made good to 'em; which those who slighted and disregarded 'em can have no Part in; and because they preferr'd their impure Practices, and the Gratification of their Lusts and Sensualities, before Endeavours after Purity, and a Thirst after Righteousness, therefore they can have no Entrance here; but will naturally fly off from this Place of Spiritual Pleasures and Delights with a *Vis centrifuga*, or a Natural Tendency to avoid that which now their settled Dispositions will for ever continue their Aversion to: So that they will of course be cast out of this happy Place into the Lake which burns with Fire and Brimstone, or into Outer Darkness, or the Vacuum of the Universal Space, or Bottomless Pit, where the most terrifying Worm of Conscience, which will never die, and the dreadful Confinement from Place, Light, and Comfort, will be that Bituminous Fuel which their final Impenitency has set on Fire by everlasting Madness, and Distraction of utter Despair, even such a Fire that can never be quenched.

For into this Place of Purity nothing can come now to render it otherwise: All those Vollies of Oaths, and horrid Execrations sent up into the Atmosphere of the Air, either upon Sea or Land, which were enough to render the Air impure, if not infectious; also those noxious Effluvia that had dispersed themselves into it thro' Diseases contracted by Vice, are now thoroughly destroyed and sent off from the Globe in the general Conflagration; and those who had not in Time forsaken their De-

filements, and made Choice of Purity in Opposition to them, must take their Flight with them, from this new Heaven and Earth, where the Tabernacle of God is fix'd, and his glorious Presence gives Fulness of Joy, and is the new *Heaven* that now encompasseth this new and purified *Earth*, which we find describ'd in St. *John*, in the foremention'd *Rev.* xxi. from Ver. 10, in such lofty and Spiritual Flights, that one wou'd think shou'd incite all Men and Women to long after it, and to exert their utmost Diligence and Industry to attain it, in that proper Method of endeavouring after that Purity of Life, which can only qualify us for Admittance into it. Let us then take a View of this Description: We find St. *John*, Ver 10. *was carried away in the Spirit to a great and high Mountain, and was shewed that great City, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God.*

Now we may observe, before he could have the *Vision* hereof, he must be fitted for it by such a Proportion of the Spirit as would raise his Mind from the low and groveling Objects of Sense to high and Spiritual ones, which is express'd by a great and high Mountain: In which spiritualiz'd State he could only be capable to take so transcendent a View of the Glories of this spiritually refined *City*, the *Holy Jerusalem*, descending out of Heaven from God.

Ver. 11. *Having the Glory of God: And her Light was like unto a Stone most precious, even like a Jasper Stone, clear as Chrystal.*

Here

Here the first thing observed in this City, is the Glory of God, which is fully manifested in it, which is the only Fountain from whence flow Streams of Pleasures, Delights, and Satisfaction, to all its Inhabitants, who all receive as great a Fulness thereof as their Spiritual Capacities are able to entertain; so that according to their Enlargement in improving their Talents, so much will their Spirits be enlarged to receive of the Fulness of this Glory. The Light here spoken of, like a Stone most precious, seems to be spoken Allegorically (which is what the Spirit of God in the Scriptures frequently make use of) to represent things to us in such wise as may best suit our present Apprehensions and Conceptions; and in this Phrase is represented the Purity and Perfection of its Light, as not being subject to the least Mixture of any Obscurity, by being likened to a Stone most precious, even a Jasper clear as Chrystal.

Ver. 12. And had a Wall great and high, and had twelve Gates, and at the Gates twelve Angels, and Names written thereon, which are the Names of the twelve Tribes of the Children of Israel.

By the Wall great and high may be understood the Strength and Defence of the City represented; by the twelve Gates, the Entrance into it. The twelve Angels have the Authority of admitting into it, such as shall be qualify'd, whose Names are represented by the Names of the twelve Tribes of *Israel*, being those whose Names are written on the Gates, even all who have distinguished themselves, by

Purity of Life, to become the true Children of *Israel*; for these are Heirs of the Promise; for they are not all *Israel*, which are of *Israel*. *Rom. ix. 6.*

Ver. 13. *On the East three Gates; on the North three Gates; on the South three Gates; and on the West three Gates.*

By the Number of Gates at each Quarter, is represented an Entrance or Admission into it, for all Kingdoms, Nations, and Languages, that shall be found worthy of it: For of all Nations, those that fear him and work Righteousness are accepted with him. *Acts x. 35.*

Ver. 14. *And the Wall of the City had twelve Foundations, and in them the Names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.*

By the Wall of the City, I have before observed, is signified its Strength and Defence, whereby nothing is to be admitted there but Purity; and here by the twelve Foundations, in which were the Names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb, may be understood, that Christ, who is stil'd the Lamb, has laid the Foundation of his Spiritual Kingdom in the Purity of the Doctrine of his twelve Apostles, and the Powers he had invested them with, whereby to persuade Mankind to accept of this Kingdom prepared for them.

Ver. 15. *And he that talked with me had a golden Reed to measure the City, and the Gates thereof and the Wall thereof.*

By the golden Reed to measure with, may be understood, the Just and Righteous Judgment that shall be executed in receiving all the
Worthy

Worthy into it, thro' the Gates thereof, or by an Obedience or Conformity to the Doctrine of his Apostles, viz. of Purity of Life, which was to be measured by a Reed of Gold, as an unerring Measure, by which the Strength of its Wall should not suffer by any Impurities being admitted into it.

Ver. 16. *And the City lieth four-square, and the Length is as large as the Breadth; and he measured the City with the Reed, twelve Thousand Furlongs : The Length, and Breadth, and Height of it are equal.*

By the City's lying four-square, may represent the four times three Gates, to receive all properly qualified from all Quarters. By the Measure of it, twelve thousand Furlongs, may probably signify the large Extent of the twelve Apostle's Commission, in which (Commission being received from Christ) consisted the City's Length, and Breadth, and Height; which being *equal*, may shew the Equality of Acceptance of all Persons into it, who are fitted for it, by proportioning their Actions to the Purity of the Apostles Doctrines.

Ver. 17. *And he measured the Wall thereof an hundred and forty and four Cubits, according to the Measure of a Man, that is, of the Angel.*

By the Measure of the Wall, (the Strength and Defence of the City) we may observe Ver. 14, That it is said to have twelve Foundations, and in each the Names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb: Which Number of twelve times twelve, exactly makes up the Number of Cubits by its Measure, an hundred forty four; which

which shews that the Strength of the Wall, the Defence of the City, consisted in that Purity, which the Apostles had, thro' Christ, inculcated upon Mankind, which was so reasonable and natural to be received, believed, and admitted, that it is here stiled the Measure of a Man, and yet so angelical and divine, by making Men and Angels fit Companions, that they are join'd together, by way of Explication, *that is*, of the Angel: And as their Doctrines were natural when revealed, so those who never enjoy'd the Advantages of this Revelation, but have by Nature sought after their Purity, will also be admitted; when those, who have been invited by Gospel Offers, will be rejected for their Non-acceptance of its Invitations.

Ver. 18. *And the Building of the Wall was of Jasper, and the City was pure Gold like unto clear Glass.*

As the Light of the City was before liken'd unto a Jasper clear as Chrystal, so here the Wall also is said to be built of it, which to me plainly intimates, that that spiritual Light of the Presence of God is the Wall or Defence of it, whereby it is preserved from all Attempts of Darkness or approach of Enemies, whose Works not bear this Light: *And the City was pure Gold like unto clear Glass*, which is again repeated in these Words, Ver. 21. *And the Street of the City was pure Gold as it were transparent Glass.*

In which Words we have a Description of the Purity of the new Earth, the Substance of which was now so thoroughly refin'd from dross-
fy

fy or heterogeneous Particles, that the purest Gold that can be here procured is not comparable to it; for the very Surface of the new Earth, or the Street of the City, is not only pure Gold, but transparent, as the purest Glass; so that tho' the Substance of the Globe, in Earth, Air, and Waters remain, it is so far renewed, changed, and * transmuted, that all its Substance is become homogeneous and transparent, that there is no Footsteps of former Things to be seen, for *the former Things are passed away*, as we have it in the 4th Verse of this Chapter.

Ver. 19, 20. *And the Foundations of the Wall of the City were garnished with all manner of precious Stones. The first Foundation was Jasper; the second Sapphire, &c.*

Here is a Continuation of the Representation of the Purity and Perfections of the City's Defence, by the Foundations of the Wall thereof, being each Foundation garnished with all manner of precious Stones; which he goes on to rehearse throughout the twelve Foundations, which are before observed to have the Names of the twelve Tribes of *Israel* written thereon; or the Names of those who by purity of Life have made themselves the true and spiritualiz'd *Israelites*. Now these Foundations being garnished with all manner of precious Stones, may signify that all manner of People and Nations, who have endeavoured after Purity of

* The Transmutation of Metals, by the Art of Chymistry, being possible, tho' rarely come at, may evince the Possibility of the whole Earth, Air, and Waters Substance, being changed, and transmuted, by an Almighty Power, in the Way he has authorized Nature in the general Conflagration.

Life, will be the Guests to furnish and garnish this City's Walls. For our Saviour tells us that *many shall come from the East, West, North, and South, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the Mansions of Bliss, when (many of) the Children of the Kingdom (or those that had had the Law and Gospel revealed to them) will be cast out (for their Disobedience thereto.)*

Ver. 21. *And the twelve Gates were twelve Pearls: Every several Gate was of one Pearl: And the Street of the City was of pure Gold as it were transparent Glass.*

Now the twelve Gates which are observ'd to signify the Admission of all Nations into the City, which shall be found qualified, as before noted, are here said to consist of twelve Pearls; and every several Gate being of one Pearl, may signify to us, that tho' People of all Nations may have Admittance there, without Respect of Persons, yet as to their Actions they must be alike refined from the Dross of Impurity, as Pearls are from the Dross of grosser Matter: For even the very Street of the City (or the Surface of the new Earth,) is now thoroughly refined and purified from all Imperfection, or the least remaining Particles to render it subject to further Change or Alteration; for whatever had before made it liable to it, is now wholly remov'd, so that now its Purity appears in Transparency; even as the Imperfections of Man's Holiness now become perfect; so that nothing but Perfection remains in the *new Heaven or Earth, or in their Inhabitants.*

Ver. 22. *And I saw no Temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it.*

The Temple of *Solomon*, in *Jerusalem*, in all its Splendor and Glory, wherein God manifested some imperfect Ideas of his Presence to those who sought after him, had a very imperfect Representation of that Fulness of Glory here to be exhibited in this new *Jerusalem*, where the Lord God and the Lamb are themselves become the very Temple of it, wherein their unspeakable Glories are manifested, from whence flow those Fulness of Pleasures, which alone can satisfy all the Desires and Longings of those who are weary and tired, and have thirsted after this Place of Rest, and have purified themselves in order to be Partakers of it.

Now who can hope or wish for more than the glorious Presence of God's infinite Perfections, to fill the whole City, or new Earth, (the Holy *Jerusalem*) with his transcendent Light and Glories? How will all Hearts here be filled with the greatest Transports of Joy and Gladness? In what Pleasure *then* will be extracted from these Inhabitants, the highest Extasies of Gratitude and Praise? In what Raptures of Joy *then* will the Heavenly Choir excite each other to united Harmony, continually raising and augmenting these spiritually ravishing Delights? For the Beatifick Vision of the Fulness of God's Glory will not only kindle these transcendent Joys, but will continue to encrease and preserve them without Weariness and without End.

Ver. 23. has been occasionally considered before, I shall therefore proceed to,

Ver. 24. *And the Nations of them that are saved shall walk in the Light of it: And the Kings of the Earth do bring their Glory and Honour into it.*

By the Nations of them that are saved, may be understood, the Righteous of all Nations, who have directed their Lives according to the best Light they had: These shall now be admitted to *walk in the Light of it*, where even the *Kings of the Earth do bring their Glory and Honour*, which are here swallowed up in Forgetfulness with the more transcendent Glories of this happy State; which all the Art of Language and Rhetorick can never sufficiently describe; and which *Eye has not seen nor Ear heard, nor the Heart of Man conceive.*

Ver. 25. *And the Gates of it shall not be shut at all by Day: For there shall be no Night there.*

So then there is no danger of the approach of Enemies to deprive these Inhabitants of the Glory and Honour they are now given the Possession of; the City's Defence is the Glory of God and the Lamb, unto which no Impurity, no Darkness, nor Night can for ever return.

Ver. 26. *And they shall bring the Glory and Honour of the Nations into it.*

By the Glory and Honour of the Nations here, I think, may be understood all Purity and Virtue, which is the Honour and Glory of all Nations, which shall here be made perfect, and receive the fullest Lustre and Beauty. For,

Ver. 27. *There shall in no wise enter into it any thing*

thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh Abomination, or maketh a Lie : But they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Thus into this Place of Purity none can approach, who have made their Hearts the Nurseries of Vice and Profaneness, by rejecting the Strivings of God's Spirit with them, and utterly refusing to hear his Calls, and to forsake their Iniquities, and by giving a deaf Ear to the Voice of the *Charmer, tho' he charm'd never so wisely* : These certainly can now no more bear the Glories of God in the Perfection of Holiness, than a Fish can live upon dry Land in the scorching Heat of the Sun, because the inseparable Consequences of contracted Habits are to render whatever is contrary to them, entirely disagreeable ; and it being now become impossible to cast off that which was thoroughly fixed in the Disposition of the Soul, it must remain for ever under the necessary Consequences that Vice has involv'd it in ; for irreclaimable Vice is of so deep a Dye of Darknes, that it will admit of no Rays of Light. Those therefore, and only those, that have made choice to walk in the Light and Truth in this Life, can bear the Light of God's Countenance, and be made glad by it.

Stand amazed then, Oh Inhabitants of the Earth! at the Stupidity and Senselesness of Mankind, that there should be such an Aversion to Holiness and Purity, thro' which only such glorious Rewards are attainable: Consider the End of Vice and the Reward of Virtue, no longer let your Choice be undetermin'd: I believe your Judgments determine for Virtue, therefore resolve

solve upon the Practice: Let nothing deter you from it: Let not the false Glosses of Vice be your eternal Ruin, (I have shewed in my former Discourse the Danger of Delays.) There is nothing can give an Admittance into the everlasting Joys of the new *Jerusalem*, but a timely Preparation by habitual Virtue: Never expect to please the Flesh as long as thou canst, and then only forsake thy Sins, when thro' Age and Infirmities thou canst not pursue them any longer, for then it will not be thy Choice to forsake them, but their leaving thee to go before thee to Judgment: For even Virtue in old Age thro' bodily Infirmities becomes decayed, and cannot be practised with the Vigour of Youth; but this is not a wilful falling away or Departure from it; for Virtue and Religion are still exercis'd in the Desire, when thro' Age or Infirmities it cannot be pursued in all its Advantages; yet then shall the practised Virtues of Youth and Strength retain their Force and go along before to lay hold on the Promises of God, and procure an Admission into this Holy City, the *New Jerusalem*.

P O S T S C R I P T.

HAVING in my third *Section* given my Sentiments of several Phænomena in Nature, of which before I had never seen an Account to my own Satisfaction, so likewise the frequent Narratives we have of Water-Spouts being common in the Trading Seas, may induce the Curious to be agreeably entertained with my Sentiments of the Cause of them.

That

That Body or Pillar, which draws such Quantities of Water out of the Ocean, I take to be compos'd of the like Hollows or Cavities which I before represented in a Thunder Storm, chain'd or link'd one to another by the outward Vessels of Water; caused by a sulphurous refined Air mixt with and in the Waters of the Ocean, and by the Ejection of the Rays of the Sun rarified and extended; whence in their expanding and opening, being surrounded by the Watry Particles, they carry along with them in their natural Ascent (upon their Rarification) vast Quantities of these Waters, in Proportion to the Violence of the first Cause which produced their Motion, and which they continue till they come into an Equilibrium with the Air and Region above, and continue to ascend in a Pillar of a Cloud, till the whole Matter of the Air which occasioned their first Rise is spent; and then the Body or Pillar, by which its Ascent was made, is taken up from the Ocean, from whence a mighty Cloud darkens the Air and disperses itself into such Quarters as God shall appoint it to execute his Designs and Purposes; and when the Air lodged in these Hollows and Cavities breaks forth (for I suppose that Tempests of these Natures always end in Thunder and Lightning) then the Rent continues and the Rain descends, as observ'd in my former Accounts of such Tempests.

Hence it is that by a Ship's running upon one of those Pillars during the Exhalation aforesaid, the Connection of these Vessels or Bladders being thereby broke, the whole Mass loses its

Con-

Connection of Parts, and the Air within flies off, and the Waters descend again into the Ocean, in such vast Quantities as to endanger at least, or if come to a Maturity of Collection to overthrow and sink the Ship.

So that of late, Care has been taken to avoid the Danger by foreseeing and shooting them, thereby to break the Connection of the Mass before the Ship is in Danger of running upon it, upon which the Waters return into the Sea again, and the remaining Collection within the Seas only now boils up and looses their Passage, by their Vessels hereafter bursting on the Surface of the Ocean; so that by the Descent of the Waters before gathered in and by the Exhalations, and the Ascent of the refined and Sulphurous Air within the Ocean that should have continued the Collection, the Seas are put into a strange Ferment, as if boiling.

By all the Works of the Almighty Author of Nature let us learn to fear and obey him; then shall we make a right Use of his *wonderful Works*, and in all our *Searches after them*, take a *true Pleasure therein*.

F I N I S.

L E T T E R S
O N
RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT,
M E L A N C H O L Y,
A N D
E N T H U S I A S M.

----- Dî ne hunc Ardorem mentibus addunt,
Euryale ? an sua cuique Deus fit dira Cupido ?

VIRG.

L O N D O N :

Printed for H. PAYNE and W. CROPLEY, at
Dryden's head, Pater-noster Row.

MDCCLXII.

J. E. T. E. R. S.

RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT.

M. E. L. A. N. C. H. O. R. Y.

A. D.

E. N. T. H. U. S. I. A. S. M.

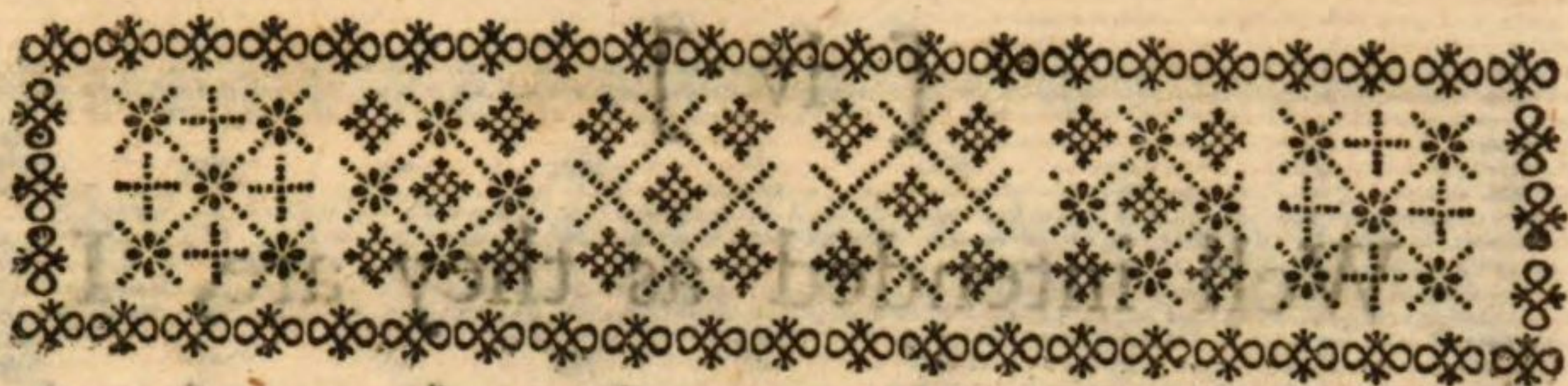
Enryale : an his capite Dope sit dila Cupido ?
T. ad hunc Ardorem mentibus addant

Vine.

L O W D O N.

Printed for M. BAYNE and W. CROFT, at
Dybbin's head, Paternoster Row.

MDCCLXII.



TO
THE RIGHT REVEREND
WILLIAM
LORD BISHOP OF
GLOUCESTER.

MY LORD,

I HAVE no other motive
for offering Your LORD-
SHIP the following Letters, than
because they co-operate, however
feebly, with your own writings
in the defence of *rational* Reli-
gion.

Well

Well intended as they are, I hope they will not be altogether unacceptable to Your LORDSHIP; and that they may be serviceable to mankind, in preventing the delusions of Fanaticism, is the only wish of,

My Lord,

Your LORDSHIP'S

Most obedient Servant,

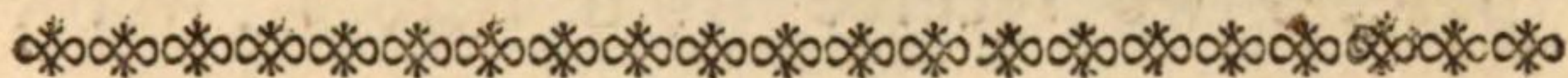
JOHN LANGHORNE.



L E T T E R S

O'N

RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT, &c.



L E T T E R I.



WILL my amiable friend become a recluse? Shall we no longer be delighted with the graces of her elegant understanding, nor instructed by her refined and digested knowledge? Shall our devotion no more be strengthened by her natural and unaffected piety, more perswasive than the labours of the

B

logical

logical divine? Is Virtue so sure of her cause, that she can part with such an advocate as CLEORA? Is Religion so prevalent, and so popular, that she should find no loss in the retreat of such a friend? The choice of life is, in general, an indifferent thing; but particular circumstances may make it a duty. The powers we receive from nature, were not given in vain: they were designed for peculiar functions; and if we neglect to exert them, we shall not answer the end of our being. CLEORA wishes not to *shine before men*; but that *light* which is given her, should be displayed for the encouragement of Piety, and the *glory* of him who gave it.—How far these ends may be answered by monastic solitude, I leave her to judge.

L E T-



L E T T E R II.

YOU have been so industrious, Madam, in the search of arguments to defend your determination, that you seem to have forgot those I offered against it. But though you may have overlooked mine, I will not pass by any that you have alleged ; for it is not so necessary to add new rays to the understanding of CLEORA, as to prevent it from being dazzled by an intemperance of light.

Solitude, you say, is the nurse of devotion. You know, my fair friend, that the benevolent Creator of the universe has

made the duty of man to consist in serving his fellow-creatures. It is impossible, therefore, that our devotion should be rendered acceptable by those means, that throw us out of the province of active virtue. *Solitude is the nurse of devotion;* but the heart is not always to be trusted to itself. That devotion which is entirely mental, may in time degenerate into spiritual pride. It is by mixing in the business of life, and the connexions of society only, that we feel our weakness; and it is by Humility alone, that Piety can subsist.

“ In retirement,” you observe, “ there
 “ is least danger of falling from virtue;
 “ and it is the duty of a christian to flee
 “ from temptation.” To resist temptation, is the duty of a christian; but not
 to

to flee from society. Were it so, it would be equally incumbent on every individual; and man would revert to his primæval state—become a Solitary and a Savage,



L E T-



L E T T E R. III.

I AGREE with my amiable friend—
 The songs of SOLOMON are *pretty songs*; and to be sure, Mr. ROMAINE's Discourses on them are *quite ravishing*. I wish, however, this may be an innocent ravishment—pardon me, CLEORA! your retiring scheme alarmed me. When I considered your elegant sense, and strong reason, I thought you incapable of being infected by the *Modern Enthusiasm*; but when I found that your pious and susceptible heart had been indulging, with ROMAINE, in the luxurious songs of Solomon, I wondered not to find its serene
 piety

piety changed into irregular and intemperate raptures. Right devotion, CLEORA, is founded on reason, which teaches us to adore the FATHER of NATURE, for the benevolent purposes of all his works: it must, therefore, be rational and uniform, which, while the passions are its vehicle, it can never be; for these depending on the constitution of the body, will be various and uncertain; and we should be more or less devout accordingly as we might be affected by age, health or sickness. It is evident, that Piety cannot depend upon those faculties, which are liable to variation and decay: it must be established on the steady principle of reason, or it will be for ever fluctuating and inconsistent; despond-

ing

ing through apprehensions that disparage the mercies of the Creator, or exulting with a confidence unbecoming a dependent creature. Of this stamp is the piety of those deluded people, whose Religion is directed by the imagination. I have known an itinerant preacher come into a village, and hold forth to the poor inhabitants the frightful images of death and damnation, 'till a general panic has spread itself through the place, and the innocent rustics have shook with fears, which they could neither account for nor avoid.

The power of imagination, in religious matters particularly, is very great—Instances there have been of persons transported by it even to insanity—

sanity—instances, CLEORA, within my own knowledge — believe me, it is dangerous to indulge it.



C L E T-



L E T T E R I V.

CAN it be necessary to distinguish light from darkness? As different are the workings of imagination, and the influences of the Divine Spirit. The first are easily distinguishable by the irregular sensations they produce—ever inconsistent, extravagant, and unequal, they disorder the frame of the mind, and destroy all propriety and consistency of conduct. Enthusiasm precludes the use of reason, and, therefore, is a species of madness; it depreciates virtue, and consequently hurts the cause of Religion; it fills the heart

heart with pride and overweening opinions ; with unreasonable triumphs and unaccountable fears. Can effects like these proceed from the Father of Light ? — from the spirit of that pure and dispassionate Being, whose harmonious and consistent works teach us a rational adoration of their Divine Creator ? Is it to be supposed, CLEORA, that the influences of the Divine Spirit should teach us to despise and to exclude the use of the noblest faculty that God has given us ? yet I never knew an Enthusiast that did not declaim against reason — all was to be referred to internal impulses ; and man was to become a mere machine, acted upon and impelled by powers not his own.

Such always has been the doctrine of
 Fanaticism — Excellent doctrine, that
 destroys the eternal obligations of mo-
 rality, and makes the Deity account-
 able for the impiety of all his creatures
 that are *void of Grace* !



LET-



L E T T E R V.

TH E R E have been Enthusiasts,
 Madam, in all ages, and in all
 Religions ; and their sentiments and
 conduct have been much alike in all,
 from the Pythian Priestesses of antiqui-
 ty, to the *green-apron'd Pythonissa* of
 our own days. Had Bishop LAVING-
 TON compared the Enthusiasm of all
 the Fanatics the world has heard of ; I
 believe he would have found, that
 though it has assumed different forms,
 its qualities were essentially the same.
 When the heathen priestess supposed
 herself influenced by the power of her
 God,

God, her imagination hurried her into the wildest extravagancies — she was convulsed, she foamed, she raved, she prayed, she preached. All this, my friend, was the effect of imagination, and not the operation of any evil spirit, as some good people have supposed. We meet with the same Enthusiasm amongst the modern Pagans.* Many of the Philosophers of old, by indulging the reveries of fancy, at length imagined that they were favoured with divine lights, and supernatural revelations.† They took the suggestions of their own sick brains, for the communications of spirits and genii; and no modern Methodist could believe himself more

* See Nieuhoff's Voyage to the East Indies.

† See Diogenes Laertius.

effectually

effectually inspired. This delusion was communicated by the Philosophers to the Christians †; and the Apostles themselves had to contend against Enthusiasm, and admonish their converts not to believe every spirit *. In those dark and barbarous ages, when the religion of Christians consisted of little more than ridiculous ceremonies; when the ordinary influences of the Spirit of God, which, as Bishop Warburton ‡ justly observes, are to enlighten the understanding and to rectify the will; when these, I say, seemed to be suspended, then, CLEORA, did Fanaticism spread her black wings over the earth,

† Coloss : ii. 8.

* 1 John. iv. 1.

‡ See Dr. Warburton's Sermons, preached before the Society of Lincoln's Inn.

and

and EGYPT, the ancient nurse of superstition, was her favourite haunt.

Should I recount to you, my amiable friend, the various effects of Enthusiasm, as they lie scattered through the history of mankind; the miseries and the absurdities it has produced, would shock your humanity or provoke your indignation—Good God! what outrages against reason, and thy pure religion, did it commit in the thirteenth century! when the extravagant FRANCIS preached to swallows and fishes; and the diabolical DOMINICUS founded the inquisition—yet these, my friend, had more followers than WHITFIELD or WESLEY.* The same Fanatic spirit

* See VOLTAIRE's Account of Religious Orders.

made LOYOLA form *the mischievous society of Jesus*; and XAVERIUS establish its power in the Indies.*

The JANSENISTS, though the greatest enemies to the JESUITS, were as rank Enthusiasts. What ridiculous work did they make at the tomb of their ABBOT DE PARIS? — The reformed Religion has not been without its Fanatics, from JACOB BEHMEN to his brethren of MOORFIELDS.

In short, CLEORA, whenever we give up Reason to the Chimæras of

* See STINSTRA's pastoral letters.

D imagination,

imagination, let us pretend to what
impulses we please, we are no better
than Enthusiasts.



L E T-



L E T T E R. VI.

RELIGIOUS MELANCHOLY was the daughter of ENTHUSIASM and SUPERSTITION; she was nursed, by her mother, in the cell of a DOMINICAN convent; and her only food was bread and water. As the parents had no other view for their daughter, than the inheritance of immortality, she was never instructed in human learning; for it was a maxim with them, that Ignorance is the mother of Devotion, and that enlightened reason serves only to cavil against the impulses of Heaven. From her mother, MELANCHOLY in-

herited gloominess and fear ; and from her father, disordered and unequal passions, flights, raptures, and reveries— She spent her days in mortification, and her nights in terror ; for she was taught to believe, that her Devotion would be acceptable to her God, in proportion as it was distressful to herself. From that persuasion, she passed the greatest part of her life in penal austerities : but, as she was the child of ENTHUSIASM, she was sometimes visited with a gleam of fanatic joy, which shone through the gloom of her cell ; and, during those intervals, she asserted that she was in Heaven. Those intervals, however, as they were too powerful for a mortal mind, were very short and very rare : her exhausted spirits were afterwards reduced to the lowest languor ;

guor ; and she, who, the last moment, was exulting in the ecstasies of Heaven, was now aghast on the brink of Hell.

Such was the life of Religious MELANCHOLY ; till the benevolent Father of Nature, pitying her undeserved miseries, and weary of her preposterous devotion, delivered the innocent wretch from that being she had received in vain.





L E T T E R. VII.

NO, CLEORA! I exclude not penitential sorrow from the duties of Religion—it is necessary in its place. But she whose life has been uniformly devoted to the service of Him who gave it, what has she to do with penitential sorrow? It can only be requisite in the change from profligacy to virtue; and to suppose it otherwise acceptable to God, were to reproach him.

Religion, my friend, wears not the habit of monastic melancholy, nor delights she in the sacrifice of penal misery.

The

The Divine Goodness could never intend, that wretchedness should be annexed to piety ; and it were impious to suppose, that he delights in the torment of his creatures. The ridiculous severities practised in the church of ROME, do not less blaspheme the perfections of the Almighty, than they reproach the reason of those deluded or designing people that maintain them. The voice of Religion is the voice of Joy ; *her ways are the ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.* Would the Almighty, whose principal aim is the welfare of his creatures, have appointed them a rule of life inconsistent with their happiness ? Could the unenlightened heathens pronounce virtue to be its own reward ; and shall not we, *to whom life and immortality is brought to light,*

light, find a pleasure in the practice of it proportionably greater?

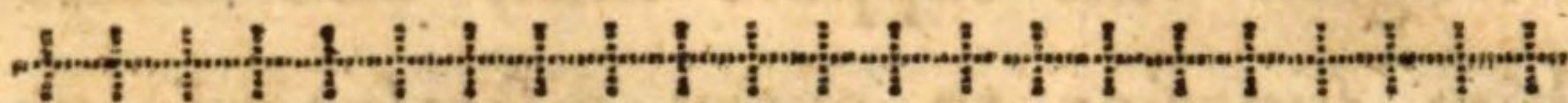
Our holy Religion, perhaps, has not suffered more from the attacks of open violence, than from the folly or treachery of her own professors: when she is disguised in a gloomy and forbidding aspect, charged with penal severities, and excluded from innocent pleasures; every man who consults his own happiness, would rather shun her as a *Phantom*, than seek her as a *Friend*. How different is the picture which the amiable and eloquent Apostle gives us of her! He represents her, what she really is, as a perpetual source of joy—*Rejoice*, says he, *evermore*; and again *I say, rejoice*—Nay, when involved in almost all the calamities that nature could suffer,

suffer, or tyranny inflict, the hopes of Religion still support him, and make him superior to every distress: *I am filled with comfort*, says he, *I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation*: In our outward circumstances indeed, *we are as men dying; but, behold, we live! as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

How different, my friend, is this rational and chearful spirit from the gloomy superstition and enthusiasm of our modern Saints!

E

L E T-



L E T T E R, VIII.

YOUR conduct, CLEORA, appears every way so exemplary, that I am at a loss to divine what temptation you desire to avoid by your proposed retirement. Is it that you think conversing in the world, implies too great a confidence in your own strength? Be diffident of this—but despise not the active powers of Reason and Understanding, which, as well as those of Grace, flow from the Divine bounty—However, trust with a full affiance in that all-powerful and all-gracious Being, who will certainly enable you to *do* and *be* whatever

whatever is necessary to procure you his approbation.

Our mutual wants, which cannot be supplied with any comfort but in a social state, and the strong instinctive bias that way impressed upon our hearts, shew, that HEAVEN intended us for society ; and can you doubt that Supreme Wisdom has fitted you for what itself designed you ? Can the Sincere of heart be apprehensive, that their virtue, their Religion, may meet with any fatal assaults, when supported by that Power which shall re-animate the dead ?

If I know you at all, you are in no danger from criminal attacks : but there is some shadow of reason for fearing, that you might possibly be led into *Dis-*

sipation, by following the fashionable world—but, pray, is there no alternative? Cannot you join sometimes in the innocent diversions of the polite, and shun the foolish ones? Cannot you give yourself some relaxation from the important duties of life, without making pleasure your business? Where the crime is only in the excess, cannot you be moderate? Were you fixed in solitude, you would find an innocent inclination, the desire of company, more troublesome and harder to be conquered, than any improper desire you can figure to yourself, of the pleasures of a gay life. The reason of this is obvious; the one is a natural inclination, the other an artificial one: and I need not tell you, that what-
ever

ever is agreeable to uncorrupted nature,
is right.

If you would seek a retreat from the passion of love, which you observe to have done some harm in the world, you must then go into a Desert indeed, which no other human foot can enter: and even there you would be sensible, that *it is not good for you to be alone*—But as this is impossible, you could not be such a recluse but that passion would probably find its way to you; and it is observed to be strongest in persons of a devout frame of mind: the same sensibility which kindles the ardours of Devotion, renders the heart susceptible likewise of human love. We see many persons, who had much better have
given

given some share of their affections to
 worthy objects here below, than have
 afflicted themselves with fruitless trou-
 bles which the God of Nature never
 meant them ; much better have become
 valuable wives, and prudent mothers,
 than proud censorious Devotees !



L E T-



L E T T E R IX.

I HOPE my amiable friend is not arrived at such a pitch of austerity, as to think that her whole life should be a continued scene of mortification and self-denial. The Divine Wisdom has so formed this lower part of the creation, that almost every thing in it serves our use, or ministers to our delight. All his works bear the marks of Benevolence—Consider every thing that He has made; and, behold, it is good! should we not then enjoy the good things of this world with temperance and decency? Should we
not,

not, with a due sense of the mercies of the Giver, really honour Him more, than if we should afflict ourselves with perpetual penances? “ We
 “ are commanded, indeed, to take up
 “ our Cross; but we are no where
 “ commanded to seek it. If we suffer
 “ afflictions, we should bear them
 “ with patience; but if we are hap-
 “ pily free from them, we may pi-
 “ ously rejoice in that freedom.”*

The love of God should always pre-
 side in our hearts; but this great rule
 complied with, He has allowed, nay,
 designed, that the inferior desires He
 has implanted in us should be mo-

* Dr. Lyttleton.

derately gratified. Of this there needs be no stronger evidence, than that He has implanted them; for Eternal Wisdom does every thing for some good end.

What are all the austerities of some Devotees among us, better than the Hair-Shirts and Scourges of a more ancient date? Superstition may vary its form, but its folly is still the same. May not the Immortal Judge say — “ Who hath required
 “ these things at your hands? Am
 “ I a *Moloch*, who delight to be wor-
 “ shipped only with sighs and groans?
 “ Have I commanded you to be
 “ virtuous, for my own benefit, or
 “ for yours? Have I not enjoined
 “ you the virtues of *Meekness*, *Content*,
 F and

“ and *Cheerfulness* ; and promised to
“ make you happy evermore, for hav-
“ ing in some measure made yourselves
“ happy, in the transient scene of
“ your probation ?”



LET-



L E T T E R. X.

THE independence of your fortune cannot justify your retreat. Wealth may exempt you from the laborious duties of life, but it adds to the civil and the social. Consider, CLEORA, that God, who has put into your hands the means of beneficence, will require an account of your Stewardship. Those who are possessed of superior knowledge or fortune, have their duty plainly pointed out to them, in the instruction of ignorance, and the relief of indigence. And will you fly from this delightful task? Will you

leave the industrious poor, to whom your bounty and protection, by being long extended to them, are become necessary? Will you give them up to the persecution of fortune, and the oppression of tyranny? Will you no longer go with *Charity* and with *Pity*, into the solitary, the seldom visited mansions of misery and distress? Behold! your Lord *is a stranger, or naked, or sick, or a prisoner!* yet, how shall he apply to you for relief? *Your Dwelling stands not on the side of the way.** Behold this wretched mourner! her widowed years are deprived of her only hope and support, in her only child! Alas! her aged heart will break—Where is the

* Homer.

tender, the sensible, the beneficent CLEORA? for she will comfort her afflicted neighbour. No — CLEORA is fled into a remote solitude, and cannot be informed of her distress. See these poor uninstructed children! the labour of their parents can no more than supply them with bread — They shall never be able to read their duty in the book of life; CLEORA, who would have procured them Instruction, knows not of their ignorance. CLEORA has forsaken the province of public virtue: her presence no longer revives the spirit of the wretched, nor awes the licentiousness of the prophane. Consider, my fair friend, how you shall be able to defend yourself against the force of these reflections, in the silent thought-

thoughtfulness of your retirement. Believe me, they would be a more just cause of sorrow and remorse, than any you can at present suggest to yourself.



LET-



L E T T E R X I.

I AM bound, by the laws of Friendship, as well as by the love of Truth, to guard my CLEORA against every wrong opinion, as well for my own sake as for hers—for, believe me, Madam, I have even esteemed the advantage of your friendship among the first blessings of my life.

With thee conversing, I forget all time;
All Seasons, and their change.

Your friendship, which, like the light of the heavenly bodies, has been ever pure, steady and permanent, shall it be
buried

buried with the rest of your social virtues? O, CLEORA! how many evils would flow from your retreat!

But let me for a moment suppose you in your retirement — You begin the day in the same manner you have ever done, with addressing your thanks and prayers to the Eternal Providence. When this pleasing task is performed, I suppose you spend the rest of the morning in religious studies; and the evening, for variety, you pass in walking and contemplation. These are all the exercises your situation can admit of; and were you of an indolent and inactive disposition, perhaps, these might be sufficient — But, you do not know your
own

own heart, if you think you can be long satisfied with a life like this. — Be assured, that the sameness of it would soon be disgustful, and languor and weariness unavoidably ensue.

On the other hand, give me leave to suppose you in a state more agreeable to nature, and the design of Providence — let me consider you as the mother of a family — your day is now diversified by various employments, and your attention called forth by different cares. The oeconomy of your house, and the instruction of your children, (for you should not leave that entirely to Tutors, be they ever so distinguished for their probity and learning) the direction

G

of

of your servants, and your attention to your husband, with many other domestic duties, will leave no languid vacuity either in your time or thoughts — but, then, to look forward to the end of your cares — to see your children exerting themselves, in their several stations, with that Benevolence and Integrity, which by your cultivation grew up with them, and which are now essential parts of their disposition—to behold this, were delightful indeed!

And is not this to serve your Creator as he ought to be served? Is not this preferable to the life of those *unprofitable servants*, who spend their days in monastic dullness——

——in

—— in the dark and dire abode,
Where FOLLY mourns in SUPERSTI-
TION's chain ;
And Priests, devoutly vain,
Forfake each virtue to adore their
God ?





L E T T E R X I I .

*A*LMOST all the wrong notions
of Religion proceed from mis-
taken apprehensions of God.

When we look up from these man-
sions of mortality, to that awful
Being who fills universal nature, we
cannot but be afraid. That reve-
rence we owe him, and which the
contemplation of his infinite Powers
and Perfections justly excites, is apt,
in the superstitious, to degenerate
into slavish fear. Fear always arises
from

from the apprehension of evil ; and the worship it offers to that Being from whom the evil is apprehended, necessarily reproaches Him as the author of it. How preposterous then, nay, how impious, is the devotion of those Christians who sacrifice to their God with the groans of misery ! who devote the day, which he has lighted up and adorned for their use and pleasure, to penal mortification ; and the Night, whose curtain he has let down for their repose, to watchful anxiety !

To avoid this error, nothing more is necessary than to form a right notion of the will of God—let us consider Him as our Father and Creator,

ator, whose Benevolence brought us into being; and who, for the comfort and support of this being, has supplied us with every thing necessary or delightful. *The will of God, then, is to dispense happiness;* and whatever makes us miserable, counteracts that will; consequently, all penal severities in the exercise of Religion, all melancholy and desponding fears, are injurious to his goodness, and absurd in his worship.

Be this truth, CLEORA, for ever present with you, that the end of Providence is to make you happy; and that it is your duty to co-operate

operate with the Divine will, by taking every means that may contribute to that end.

LETTER XIII.

SUFFER me a little to extend and illustrate the thoughts contained in my last. The will of God I observed, was my happiness.

It is, my friend! this truth is visible in all his works; and written in such characters that He who rewards may read. It was for this end alone, that he appointed us a law; for what motive should induce him to

do it? Can our Righteousness or our Goodness afflict him? by no means — infinitely happy and secure in his own perfections, he wants not the



L E T T E R. XIII.

SUFFER me a little to extend and illustrate the thoughts contained in my last. *The will of God, I observed, was to dispense happiness.* It is, my friend ! this truth is visible in all his works ; and written in such characters, that *He who runneth may read.* It was for this end alone, that he appointed us a law : for what other motive should induce him to do it ? Can our Righteousness or our Goodness assist him ? by no means — infinitely happy and secure in his own perfections, he wants not the aid,

aid, and cannot fear the enmity, of man. Such, then, is his unspeakable goodness, that he exacts no obedience from us, but what is necessary to our own felicity. The happiness of man is founded in society; and without the virtues which the Divine Laws enjoin, Society could not subsist.

When the Almighty gave his Laws to the Israelites by the legation of MOSES, each command had a manifest tendency to the preservation and peace of that people. Difference of Religion has always been the cause of differences in civil life—The ISRAELITES, from their long residence in *Egypt*, had fallen into all the superstitions of that idolatrous people; and the Gods

H

they

they worshipped, were more in number than their Tribes. Hence, being disunited in Religion, they became so in Government; and were continually torn by Factions, and disordered with Jealousy. The first commandment, therefore, that they received from the true God, enjoined them to an union of belief; and, “Thou shalt have none other Gods “but me,” was a precept which procured that Peace and Harmony among them, that was the foundation of their future ease and prosperity. The Second Command was a supplement to the first; and entirely banished Idolatry, by cutting off the adoration of Images, without which it could not possibly subsist. The third taught them a new and unheard of Reverence

rence to their God, by prohibiting them to mention his name, except upon the most important occasions, and in the most solemn manner. This Reverence was the foundation of their obedience to the commands that followed; all which, by enforcing Humanity, Justice, and Truth, procured, in consequence, the peace, the safety, and the happiness of every individual.

But if the old Law was calculated for the benefit of those who were subject to it, the Christian Dispensation will appear infinitely more so. Our Blest Saviour and his Apostles have laid down such a System of morals, and have carried human virtue to such a pitch of excellence and

H 2

purity,

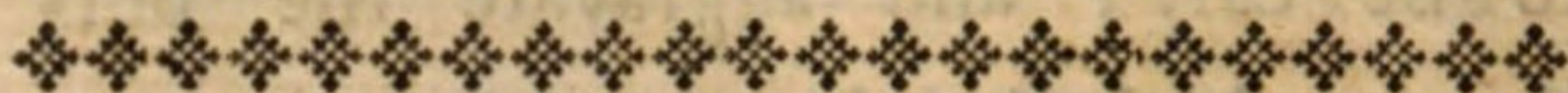
purity, as was, till then, neither conceived nor thought of. Men are now taught to knit together in Society with mutual affection, and to unite themselves in the delightful Bond of brotherly love. In short, all the Christian Doctrines and Precepts, breathe so amiable, so delightful a spirit, that it would be for the advantage of Society to cultivate and establish them, exclusive of every prospect of future reward.

Thus, my friend, while our Heavenly Father treats us, not as servants, but as sons; while a parental kindness is visible in all his intentions; shall we not thankfully and chearfully enjoy the blessings he has appointed us? shall we make that
yoke

yoke painful, which he has declared to be easy; and aggravate the burthen, which he has appointed to be light?



LET-



L E T T E R. XIV.

THE affliction of innocence, is the most painful sight in the world; and though that affliction be voluntary, proceeding from mistaken Piety, it is still certainly very pitiable.

In the early part of my life, I had the happiness to be acquainted with ELEANORA. You know her, my friend: it was impossible to live within her circle, and not know ELEANORA; the collected and expressive

pressive sweetness of her aspect, and the tender sensibility of her heart, made her universally beloved and admired.

This amiable person, about the age of nineteen, became a prey to the monster *Superstition*. She had been induced by a maiden aunt to go several times to a conventicle. I observed her cheerfulness abated, and imputed the change to want of health ; till one evening, when I visited her, and, thinking to divert her melancholy humour, ventured to ask her for a song — She started at the proposal, and — “ What,” says she, “ would you have me sing ? enough has been given to vanity ” —

“vanity”—’Twas in vain that I represented to her, the innocence of such an amusement—in vain that I told her, it was necessary for the mind to suspend its attention, and vary its pursuits; that it could not be more agreeably or more innocently relaxed, than by music; and that even the exercises of Devotion, by being too assiduously repeated, would become languid and unaffecting.

ELEANORA continued to encourage a kind of stupifying melancholy, while her good aunt and her fanatic Teacher, mutually blessed each other for having, as they termed it, *brought a Soul to a sense of her sins.* That
heaviness

heaviness which hung upon her heart, they told her was *the first fruits of the spirit*; and that to endeavour to divert it, would be *fighting against God*: that she must wait, with patience, *till the great work was wrought in her*; and that she should soon experience the impulse of the spirit, *in the blessed assurance of her salvation*. In short, with this and such like Cant, did they almost turn the head of this pious young lady—She waited in vain for those extraordinary *convictions and sensations*, which they told her she must feel, or be *a Reprobate*; for that, *without experience, no one should see the Lord*.

At length her Melancholy affected
her constitution; and she languished
away in the bloom of life, a Sacrifice
to FANATICISM.



L E T-



L E T T E R X V .

I KNEW you would be affected with the story of poor ELEANORA; but I did not expect, at the same time, to find you making motions towards your removal to B—: what is there in B— more acceptable to your Creator, than in MOUNT SION, or in JERUSALEM, or even *in this city*? THAT POWER, whose existence is universal, must be present to hear, and ready to protect you, in every place alike. HE, who at once receives the united worship of all his works, is His favour to be

courted, by a gloomy retreat from the general voice of praise? He, who reads the language of every heart, needeth He the silence of solitude to distinguish sounds?

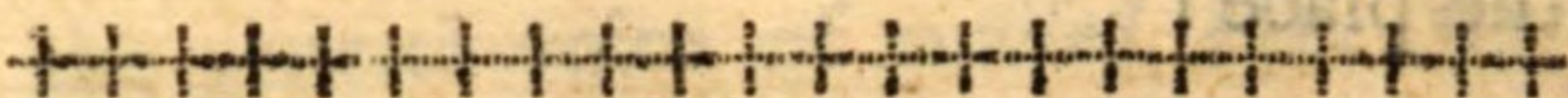
If I rightly recollect the situation of B —, it is one of the most romantic places I ever beheld. The house, I think, stands in the bottom of a narrow valley, whose sides are so beset with tall woods, that it is impossible to perceive it till you are within a very few paces of it — And are there not some remains of a ruin'd monastery, at a small distance from the house; through whose broken arches you behold a lake of water, which, excepting the wild fowl that haunt it,

it, is the only moving object near the place ?

Such a Hermitage, CLEORA, might do well as a retreat for the recollection of a day ; but to pass a whole life in it, would be unnatural ; and to do it without misery, impossible.



LET-



LETTER XVI.

YOU astonish me, CLEORA! Is it possible you can believe, that any of the vain pretenders, of our times, to such an Inspiration as the Apostles enjoyed, are really possessed of it?

When we speak of Inspiration as subsisting now, we do not mean such Instruction as the Apostles received from Heaven, whereby new truths were revealed; we mean *the Divine Grace and Assistance, whereby*
Truths

Truths already revealed operate, if we be not wanting to ourselves, to our spiritual benefit.

The Apostles did not barely affirm that they were inspired, but wrought great and convincing miracles to prove it. Now, we might very safely put the matter to this Test, and call upon these pretenders to Inspiration, to shew the seal of their Commission in some wonderful supernatural work — But the truth is, not only that miracles are ceased, as no longer necessary; but that if a miracle should now be wrought, it would not prove an Inspiration, like that of the Apostles, in the Worker; because the Scripture, whose Canon was long since

since compleated, declares its own sufficiency in every thing necessary to salvation, and pronounces an Anathema against Him who shall *add to it* or take away the least part of it.

Neither do we come to a right understanding of difficult texts, by inspiration; for what is necessary to conduct us to Eternal Happiness, is to be found in the plain passages of scripture. In this respect, the way is so easy, that the *way-faring man*, if possessed of an humble heart, *shall not err therein*. Then he errs, when he wanders from the beaten way; when he pretends to penetrate mysteries; when he seeks to know
more

more than the Fundamentals of Christianity; or when he would lay new foundations. Difficult Texts of Scripture must be interpreted in the same manner, as difficult passages in other writings; by a knowledge of the original languages, and of the Customs of those times when they were written; by considering the connexion of the discourse, or the analogy of the system, as well as by consulting the opinions of learned men who have made these things their study.

But you allege, that though outward miracles are ceased, yet inward ones are not. I answer, that there is no occasion for a Miracle, to enable us to know what we are to be-

K

lieve

lieve and do ; and Heaven will not do what is unnecessary—The aids of Grace, for the performance of our duty, are indeed supernatural ; but these are ordinarily dispensed.

Be pleased also, my good friend, to reflect, how much easier it is to counterfeit the inward, than the outward operations of the spirit : how easy it is for persons, who have a sufficiency of forehead, and a fluency of tongue, to pretend they are inspired. The rapidity of their language, flowing from a vain glorious confidence, seems wonderful ; and the enthusiastic fury of their elocution is very catching, not only with persons of weak, but with those also
of

of warm and zealous minds. But the Priestess of Apollo was equally rapid and impetuous; and had, if possible, a greater degree of the *Furor entheus*, than any modern Methodist:

Swift starts the colour from her cheeks; her looks

Human no more: her hair the holy fillets

Bursts: her big heart swells with the foaming rage.

Her eye darts fire, and thunder tones her voice.

Poor and wretched is that boasted Inspiration, which cannot give its subjects, however illiterate, the know-

ledge of the original languages of the scripture ; or, indeed, a competent acquaintance with their own.

Though our Enthusiasts seem very much averse to Popery, yet they hold some of the worst doctrines of it—I speak not now of their Uncharitableness, their indiscriminate condemnation of all who differ from them—But what falls under the article we are now considering, is, their pretence to a plenary Inspiration, which is only another name for Infallibility, one of the rotten pillars of the Romish Church. All the difference is, that instead of one Pope, these find a thousand, in their ignorant Teachers, whom they consider
as

as so many Gods; while their crude
and undigested Preachments are looked
upon as oracles.



LET-



L E T T E R. XVII.

I AM of opinion, that a lady had better employ her time on the plain doctrines of Christianity, than on such as are abstruse: but since you desire some account of the doctrine of predestination, I will give it you, lest some of the self-commissioned Teachers should infuse into you such opinions, as dishonour the Father of the Universe.

They who believe in *absolute predestination*, that is to say, they who believe that the Almighty has fore-
doomed

doomed any part of mankind to eternal misery, make the Supreme Being the worst and most arbitrary of tyrants. They draw him in as bad a light, as Satan himself can be conceived; nay, in a worse; for thus they represent to themselves Infinite Power armed to do evil—Horrid Blasphemy! CLEORA, need I say more? This is the doctrine of God's *elect*! of his *beloved*! of his *Saints*! This is the burden of the song at *Moorfields* — “Gracious
 “art thou, O Lord! for some Thou
 “hast chosen to be heirs of salvation;
 “and some Thou hast damned to
 “everlasting misery, *before they are*
 “*born, and before they have done*
 “*good or evil.*”

Great

Great God! pardon the blasphemy
of thy saints!

Is it possible, my friend, that the
ALL-WISE BEING should send his
rational Creatures into this world as
Probationers, and yet have no regard
to their works? Has he not, on
the contrary, declared, that *He will*
judge us according to our works? Has
he not assured us, that *He would have*
all men be saved and come to the know-
ledge of the truth? To what purpose
are all his earnest exhortations, and
melting intreaties to us to make a
right use of our time here, if our
conduct be quite out of the account?
As for the ninth Chapter to the Ro-
mans, it describes the advantages
which God, of his good pleasure,
bestows

bestows upon one particular nation, in preference to another; the reasons of which may be obvious to his Providence, though they are not quite so to us. This passage does not in the least relate to the happiness or misery of individuals in another life; for the great argument the Apostle is here insisting on, is, that of Heaven's rejecting the Jewish nation, for a time, from the privilege of being his people on account of their infidelity, and receiving the Gentiles in their stead; which he illustrates by a parallel instance of the blessings which the *Israelites* descended from *Jacob* enjoyed, in preference to the *Edomites* descended from *Esau*.

It would be needless for me to point out to you, my CLEORA, the miserable consequences which this doctrine may produce. Be it sufficient to tell you, that it has driven many unhappy creatures to Despair, upon whose weak Credulity the Ignorance or the Baseness of Fanatics had imposed the belief of it.



L E T-



L E T T E R. XVIII.

A PERSON who does not believe in absolute predestination, will not easily be brought to think, that he has an *infallible assurance* of his own salvation. This is another of the audacious doctrines of Fana-ticism.

Certainly the highest point we can arrive at here, is a well grounded hope consequent upon a good life. This may be called a moral, though not an absolute certainty; for since the assistance of God will not be

wanting to such as live in his fear, when they have long behaved as becometh Christians, they may reasonably hope, that they *shall retain their integrity, and not let it go* in the last trial.

The Apostle advises the best of Christians to take heed lest they fall; and that, by falling, he here means falling finally, is plain from the connexion of the discourse.

The argument, which the Author of *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of Saint Paul*, makes use of, is decisive in this point, as well as with respect to Faith and Works.

“ If

“ If any one imagines,” says he,
 “ that he sees any difference between
 “ the doctrines of *St. James* and
 “ *St. Paul*, concerning Justification
 “ by Faith or by Works ; let him
 “ only consider these words in the
 “ first Epistle to the Corinthians —
 “ *but I keep under my body and bring*
 “ *it into subjection, lest that, by any*
 “ *means, when I have preached to*
 “ *others, I myself should be a cast-*
 “ *away.*

“ If *St. Paul* had believed, or
 “ taught, that Faith without Works
 “ was sufficient to save a Disciple of
 “ Christ, to what purpose did he
 “ keep under his body, since his sal-
 “ vation was not to depend upon *that*
 “ being subjected to his Reason, but
 “ merely

“ merely upon the Faith he profes-
 “ sed? His Faith was firm; and so
 “ strongly founded upon the most
 “ certain conviction, that he had no
 “ reason to doubt its continuance :
 “ How could he then think it possi-
 “ ble, that while he retained that
 “ saving Faith, he might neverthe-
 “ less be a cast-away? or if he sup-
 “ posed that his election and calling
 “ was of such a nature, as that it
 “ irresistibly impelled him to Good,
 “ and restrained him from Evil;
 “ How could he express any fear,
 “ lest the lusts of his body should
 “ prevent his Salvation? Can such
 “ an apprehension be made to agree
 “ with the notion of absolute predef-
 “ tination, ascribed by some to *St.*
 “ *Paul*? He could have no doubt,
 “ that

“ that the Grace of God had been
 “ given to him in a most extraordi-
 “ nary manner ; yet we see, that
 “ he thought his Election was not
 “ so certain, but that he might fall
 “ from it again through the natural
 “ prevalence of bodily appetites, if
 “ not duly restrained by his own vo-
 “ luntary Care.”



LET-



L E T T E R X I X .

BY Divine Grace, my friend, we mean the favour and Concurrence of Heaven assisting our endeavours in the exercise of our duty.

Agreeably to this, our Redeemer tells us, that *without him we can do nothing* ; that *his Grace is sufficient for us* ; that *we may do all things through his Holy Spirit strengthening us*.

The

The Enthusiasts go farther—They look upon Divine Grace as a Power, not only exciting, but irresistibly commanding the will, actuating them as machines, and doing every thing in order to their Salvation, without their consent or concurrence—Slight, half-thinkers may imagine, that thus they do the greater honour to the merits of Christ; and to the operations of the Holy Spirit: but to suppose and to make a merit of believing in an Oeconomy of Grace that is inconsistent with the wisdom of God, and the plain dictates of his word, is really to dishonour Him.

We know experimentally, that we have some degree of liberty of will; and that we have a right to inves-

M

tigate

tigate truth by reason and argument. We may appeal also to Scripture, which in the same text where it speaks of *God's working in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*, calls upon us *to work out our own Salvation*; and elsewhere exhorts us *to obey the truth*, and *not to resist or quench the Spirit*. Now if it is not in our power to resist the Spirit, if we cannot help obeying the Gospel, these are vain words.



LET-



L E T T E R XX.

BY the command to *pray always*, and to *pray without ceasing*, some men have been led to think, that they ought to bestow their whole time upon this duty, to be continually in the depths of Meditation, and the fervours of Devotion — But though some of these men may think piously, they are all of them far from thinking soberly.

To confute this opinion, I need only observe that the mind of man, in this imperfect state, cannot by any

means *perpetually* bear such an abstraction of thought, as the adoration of God requires; that the necessities of our bodies, and the labours of life, ask a great portion of time; that by a seasonable attendance to these, we are serving God in the most acceptable manner; and that he is really more honoured, when we approach him at fixed seasons, with minds detached from the cares of life, and properly prepared for devotion, than if we should always be calling on his name.

No Enthusiast in the world can *pray always*, in the strict, literal sense of the words; therefore, by praying always, is only meant that we ought to make prayer our constant and daily practice; and that we ought never to neglect or
incapacitate

incapacitate ourselves for that sublime and delightful intercourse, which we have the honour to hold with the Sovereign of Nature.

Another expression in the passage just referred to, deserves also explanation --- I mean that of *praying in the spirit*. By *praying in the spirit*, or, *with the spirit*, as it might be as well translated, is meant that sincerity and attention which ought always to accompany this duty. A prayer is not barely to be repeated, but to be offered up. We must raise our hearts to the Deity, and keep them fixed on that supreme object, with such a pious reverence as becomes dependent Creatures in the presence of their Creator.

It

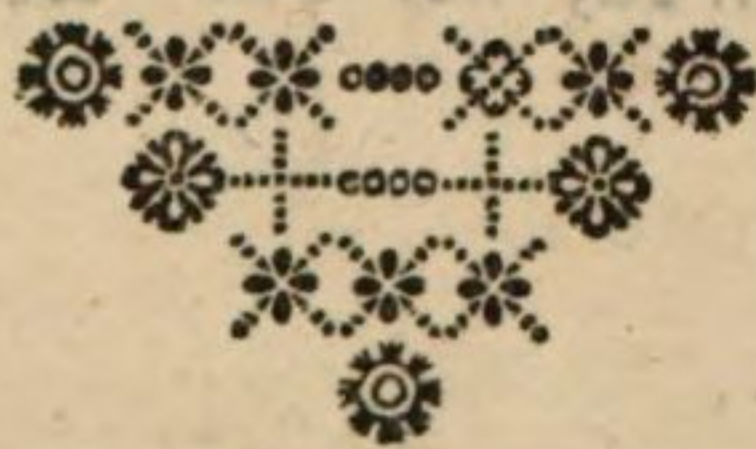
It becomes us, indeed, to put up our Prayers rather with a composed affection, than with the excesses of passion ; lest *we speak unadvisedly* to the Father of Wisdom, and *offer the sacrifice of Fools*.

To avoid any impropriety of this kind, a well-composed form of prayer is preferable to all extemporary effusions.

No argument can be brought from the church of Corinth in *St. Paul's* time, to shew that it ought to be conducted in the same manner now. For *then* they really prayed by Inspiration ; *now* that Inspiration no longer subsists—Surely a congregation may better join in a form of prayer, which they know to be a good one;

one; than in a suddenly conceived effusion, which, for ought they know, may, in the next expression, be blasphemous, or, at least, absurd.

Adieu! my dear and amiable friend
—May that Power, to whom your
Piety will always be acceptable, lead
you along the paths of Truth and
Reason, to his Immortal Light!



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